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BEQUEST OF
GEORGINA LOWELL PUTNAM
OF BOSTON

Received, July 1, 1914.



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CLAIMS AND RESOURCES
OF THE
WEST INDIAN COLONIES.

A LETTER

TO THE

RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

LATE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

BY THE

HON. E. STANLEY, M.P.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:
T. & W. BOONE, 29, NEW BOND STREET.

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Bequest of
Georgina Lowell Putnam

A LETTER,

ETC.

Albany,
London, May 21, 1850.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE postponement until the last day of this month, of the motion originally intended to have been brought forward on the 7th, for the exclusion of Slave-grown Sugar from the markets of Great Britain, induces me to address you on a subject to which your attention has necessarily long been turned—on which the opinion which you may express will carry with it no ordinary weight, both in the House and in the country,—with which your intimate acquaintance, official and private, might appear to render information needless, as it doubtless renders advice presumptuous, were it not that the few remarks which I shall offer are given from personal experience of a very recent date, and in so far may be deemed by you deserving of the attention which an unprejudiced witness is entitled to claim for the testimony which he offers. Ability may be required in the counsel who pleads the cause—honesty alone gives a value to evidence: and though I do not disclaim all party feeling in public affairs, yet in the discussion of this question, there is nothing which I should more deeply deprecate,

than the prevalence of a party spirit; for believing as I do the claims of the West Indian colonists to be founded in reason and justice, and knowing, that so far from their present distressed condition having been exaggerated by report, it has never yet been fully and faithfully pourtrayed; I am satisfied that an impartial hearing—a full and fair discussion—an appeal to those sources of information which the debates of the last four years have opened—and above all, a careful separation of the matter in hand, from the equally important, but wholly distinct questions of agricultural and financial policy, are all that will be needed to guarantee a speedy redress of past injustice, and a pursuance for the future of a course better calculated to ensure the prosperity of the Colonial Empire.

You may perhaps ask, why I should have taken this mode of addressing you, instead of availing myself of the opportunity presented of expressing my opinion on Sir Edward Buxton's motion. My reasons are two-fold. In the first place, I could hardly expect, as an unpractised speaker, to obtain a hearing sufficiently long and patient to enable me fully to state the views which I hold, with the reasons by which I have been led to form them; and knowing, moreover, the very just aversion entertained by the House for after-dinner statistics, and concurring in the general opinion that figures, when stated in debate, (even should they by some special miracle be correctly heard and reported), may be employed to prove anything or everything, I wished to lay before the public the few calcula-

tions which I have made, in a form in which their accuracy can more surely be tested, and their errors, if any, ascertained.

In the next place, while the speaker must necessarily engage, if not the ear, at least the time of his audience, and that audience one justly impatient of protracted statements and unnecessary details, a publication which, like the present, possesses at least the negative merit of forcing itself upon no one's notice, can hardly be said to entail upon its author the charge of presumption, in endeavouring to secure for himself, or the subject which he brings forward, an undue share of public attention.

One subject especially has led me to offer my testimony (*valeat quantum valet*) on the question of West Indian protection. We have writings and speeches in plenty from men personally acquainted with the Colonies: but their knowledge of the subject on which they treat is generally of a nature to preclude impartiality. Again, there is in England an abundance of able and well-informed men capable of giving an unbiassed judgment on the cause: but in almost every case their opinions are drawn exclusively from the reports of others. I have, myself, no interest in the West Indies beyond that which is common to every Englishman. It was with no party view that I sought to ascertain their actual condition; and having gone out open to conviction, and returned convinced, I proceed to lay before you, as briefly as I can, the result of an experience, limited indeed, but I believe not in-

fluenced to any considerable degree, either by personal feeling or political connection.

I shall endeavour to prove (1.) that distress exists widely and generally throughout the West Indian colonies: (2.) that it arises from no fault of the planter, who, twice before brought to the verge of ruin by the policy of the Imperial Government, and having twice by his own exertions raised himself into a condition of at least comparative prosperity, is now placed in a position from which no efforts which he can make will suffice, without the intervention of legislative assistance, to raise him: (3.) that no material improvement can reasonably be expected during the continuance of the present law as regards import duties: (4.) that the claims of the colonist are wholly distinct from those of the agricultural interest at home: and lastly, that the peculiar circumstances under which the Act of 1846 was passed, render its authority in no sense binding upon present or future Parliaments.

I.—I visited the colonies of Jamaica, Guiana, and Trinidad in the course of last autumn: and though not unprepared by general report to find the inhabitants of those countries in a state of considerable distress, I had, in common with most men who take their opinions from the evidence of newspapers or Parliamentary Blue Books, very much underrated the nature and amount of their sufferings. That in the statement which I now submit to you, I have not exceeded the truth, I can faithfully affirm: my only fear is, that while in England I shall be

accused of the usual exaggeration of travellers, those who, to their misfortune, may possess a practical experience on the subject, will complain of a picture so imperfectly and feebly coloured.

To begin with British Guiana. I may perhaps be allowed to call your attention to an extract from the following despatch, addressed to His Excellency Governor Barkly by Lord Grey, in the summer of 1849. I quote it, premising only that, as you well know, Mr. Barkly was, in 1846, an advocate of unrestricted imports in sugar, and that his testimony is therefore doubly valuable, as being that of a political opponent. As his despatch, being written in the same strain, is in fact echoed in the reply, I do not think it necessary to give it at length.

“I have read this despatch and its enclosures with feelings of great pain, and of much anxiety for the future, since the picture you have presented to me of the present state of society in Guiana, and of the actual condition and prospects of all classes of its inhabitants, is gloomy in the extreme, and yet it bears too obviously the character of truth for me to doubt its accuracy.

“It is, indeed, most melancholy to learn, that while the difficulties of the planters have continued, since the abolition of slavery, to become more and more severe, until now their ruin appears to be almost complete, and the depreciation of property, once of such great value, has reached a point which has involved in the deepest distress great numbers of persons both in this country and in the colony.

“At the same time, the negroes, instead of having made a great advance in civilization, as might have been hoped, during the 15 years which have elapsed since their emancipation, have, on the contrary, rather retrograded than improved; and that they are now, as a body, less amenable than they were when that

great change took place, to the restraints of religion and of law—less docile and tractable, and almost as ignorant, and as much subject as ever to the degrading superstitions which their fathers brought with them from Africa.”

Lord Grey then proceeds to lay the blame on the policy pursued by the Government with regard to emancipation; therein furnishing a sample of the “*petitio principii*,” a mode of argument, which, from its obvious convenience when corresponding with an official subordinate, finds much favour in Downing Street. Mr. Barkly could probably suggest a different cause: but to do so would be to prove his logic at the expense of his prudence.

As to the existence of distress, however, this evidence is conclusive, and if further proof be needed, it may be found in the following extracts, from addresses presented to the Governor on the occasion of his visiting Berbice. They are taken from the Berbice Gazette of Oct. 15, 1849.

“It cannot but prove a source of the deepest sorrow to your Excellency to behold in your tour of inspection throughout this county, the rapid progress of desolation and decay, consequent upon the measures of the Imperial Government, measures which, though intended to promote the general interests of the empire, have been only attended with a wholesale destruction of property here, without producing an amount of benefit to the mass of the population at home, in any degree commensurate with such a fearful, but one-sided sacrifice.

“We would particularly draw your Excellency’s attention to the condition of the Courantyne Coast, the West Bank of the Canje Creek, and both banks of the river Berbice, and we would pray your Excellency to compare it with the condition in which you found them on your first visit to this county a few years ago.

“At that time your Excellency found magnificent estates, inde-

pendent and wealthy proprietors, a thriving class of European subordinate officers, and a peasantry, beyond all comparison, the most happy and prosperous in the world. Now in every direction your Excellency will only encounter impoverished proprietors ; you will find the introduction of intelligent European servants discontinued, the peasantry relapsing with astonishing and most alarming rapidity into a state of greater barbarism than at any former period, and innumerable fine buildings and costly machinery falling rapidly into dilapidation and decay, and approachable only by water communication, the roads and thoroughfares being quite impassable.

“That this is no over-drawn picture your Excellency will have but too fatally conclusive proof, but it may well be inferred from the fact that since that time three cotton, thirty coffee, and nine sugar estates in this county alone have been totally abandoned, and are now relapsing into a wilderness.”

In corroboration of the statements contained in the above, I subjoin His Excellency's reply, especially requesting your notice of the sentence with which the extract concludes.

To the Inhabitants of the County of Berbice.

“I have listened to the Address, which has just been read, with mingled feelings of pleasure and of pain,—of pleasure at the expressions of confidence which you are kind enough to use with respect to my appointment by Her Majesty to the Government of British Guiana,—of pain at the gloomy picture which you draw of the present condition of this once flourishing portion of that important colony.

“It is true, as you remind me, that when I first visited Berbice, eleven years ago, her proprietors were prosperous, her merchants thriving, and her newly emancipated peasantry rapidly ascending in the scale of civilization.

“It is too true, likewise, as you point out, that since that period the cultivation of coffee has been entirely given up, and that of sugar abandoned on several fine plantations, whilst, if the labourers have not actually retrograded, no one can allege that

they have made satisfactory progress, considering the advantages they have enjoyed, or feel exempt from anxiety as to their future welfare, if deprived of schools and churches by the want of funds, and cut off from communication with the higher classes of society by the impassable state of the roads.

“It may be, as you allege, that the policy of the British nation since emancipation, in respect both to the protection of our produce against the competition of slave labour, and to the introduction of immigrants, has been vacillating and injurious, but some at least of the calamities to which you allude cannot in fairness be attributed to imperial legislation.”

It is not much defence for a Government to say that “some of the calamities” under which its subjects are labouring may be attributed to causes over which it possesses no influence. A monopoly of mischief would be too much for even the Colonial Office to claim. But I proceed to quote the somewhat more detailed statements made by Mr. Barkly’s predecessor in office, Sir Henry Light, and repeated by him before the Select Committee which sat on the affairs of Ceylon and Guiana in March 1849. Exactly one year earlier, in March 1848, Sir Henry Light wrote as follows to Lord Grey:—

“As to the distress of the planters there can be but one opinion: absent or present proprietors are all in the same category, and are contemplating the abandonment of estates. I believe at this moment, if any person could influence a change in the present stand against civil lists and supplies it would be myself; thus are opinions changed, but despair breaks all forms; and unless I am able by the next mail to communicate some other concessions to the planters, your Lordship will have to settle their financial difficulties as circumstances demand. The labourers have the money that has been expended on them since emancipa-

tion ; whatever be their rise in society hereafter, they are totally unfit now to carry on the cultivation of estates without some responsible head, though they probably will be the purchasers of many of the estates as they fall to the law. Civilization will not benefit by this change of hands, as has been proved on several of the estates purchased by negroes on the east coast, Demerara particularly, where the original purchasers have created such disorders, by sub-selling and sub-letting, that no combined system of industry, the only possible mode of keeping up a sugar estate, has been followed. Many persons have endeavoured to pursue the métairie system since the money crisis, but few have carried it out, the negroes not being under supervision in which they have confidence, neglect the cultivation."

And again,

"It is since 1847 that you have observed what you call the prostrate condition of the colony?—I think since the middle of 1847.

"What course has been adopted in the colony in consequence of the fall of prices and of this over cultivation?—A great many planters have given up, as I understand."

My next reference will be to an even more certain authority, the official returns of the number of estates in the colony, which at three different periods continued to export produce.

Total number of sugar estates which made returns of produce for taxation in British Guiana were—

in 1841	215	See Local Guide, page lii.
„ 1846	208	taken from official returns.
„ 1848	187	taken from the same.

The diminution in the first period of five years is 7

The diminution in the second period of two years 21

In February 1850 there were 27 estates under sequestration, of which 25 were sugar estates.

This is so far important, that it proves the retrograde condition of a country not surpassed in point of natural advantages by any in the world ; but

you will easily see that it furnishes a very inadequate idea of the real depreciation of property which has taken place, since every estate which continues to produce any crop at all—no matter how little, or at what price saleable—remains on the list as before. A more accurate measure, may perhaps be found in the following list of sales, effected before and after 1846. It will be obvious that the number of estates thus sold and resold, within a period of sixteen years, must necessarily be very limited; and consequently, that there is no room for a mere selection of isolated cases, which might give an exaggerated and unreal impression of distress.

Indeed, even here the depreciation is not fully represented: for, in order to be sold, an estate must find a purchaser; and a very large proportion of those not yet wholly abandoned, are only not in the market because their owners, or the creditors of those owners, are well aware that it is useless to send them there.

Name.	Date.	Mode of Sale.	Price.		Date of Resale.	Mode of Resale.	Price.	
			Currency.	Sterling.			Currency.	Sterling.
Greenfield	1835	Execution	f. 167,000	£11,516	1849	Execution	dl. 6,000	£1,250
Vrow Anna	1838	do.	435,000	30,000	1848	do.	5,000	1,042
Den Amstel	1838	do.	79,460	5,480	1847	do.	10,150	2,114
Montrose	1840	{ Public Auction		38,000	1849	do.	9,300	1,937 10s.
Peters Hall	1841		113,000	7,792	1847	do.	26,500 ⁰	5,521
Cullen	1841	do.	dl. 78,000	16,250	1849	Private Sale		
Retrieve	1843	do.	22,500	4,479	1847		4,800	1,000
Malgré Tout	1843	do.	114,000	23,750	1848	Execution	13,000	2,707
Vive la Force	1843	do.	67,000	14,000	1849		3,000	625
Maryville	1844	do.	18,000	3,750	1849	do.	6,750	1,406
Aggregate Value				£155,017	Aggregate			£17,602 10s.

The exchanges in this table are calculated at fourteen guilders ten stivers (f. 14·10) to the £.
and four dollars eighty cents (dl. 4·80) to the £.
The currency was changed from guilders to dollars in 1841.

In addition to the above, I may subjoin the following communication, forwarded to me by a gentleman lately returned from Guiana :—

“The La Grange and Windsor Forest estates were bought by Mr. Cruikshank for £25,000, and £40,000, in 1838 and 1840 respectively. The two were sold together, a few weeks ago, for £11,000 nominally: but this price included a claim for £5000 due to the purchaser, making the actual purchase money £6000, or something less than one-tenth of their original value.”

Shewing a fall in aggregate value of something like 90 per cent! Will any one say after this, that the statements which reach them of colonial distress are exaggerated or over-coloured? Take now the description given by a Member of the Court of Policy, Mr. White, himself a planter, addressing the Combined Court in presence of the Governor: and let it be noticed that the accuracy of his assertions appears no where to have been disputed in the subsequent debate.

“To shew how property in this country had depreciated in value within the last few years, it appeared to be necessary only to compare the present value of that property with what it brought a few years ago. The value of fixed property—sugar estates—before emancipation, was estimated at 20 millions of pound sterling, or twice the value of the slaves, as they were appraised by the Commissioners. But what was the value of that same property now? There were still 220 estates in the colony. If the sales which had taken place within the last year—were to be taken as a criterion of the present value of property—and he thought they could very properly be taken as a criterion—it would be found that the average value of estates did not exceed £3,000. It was only the other day that two large estates which, within his recollection, a few years ago would have brought £40,000, were sold for £3,000 each.

Therefore, taking £3,000, as the average value of estates, the real value of estates here, including cotton and coffee estates, was £660,000; that was to say, property which some years ago would have brought 20 millions sterling, had been, in consequence of the measures of the British Government, reduced in value to £660,000. That shewed the utter annihilation which had taken place in the value of all property in the colony. There was another point which would also shew the great depreciation which had taken place in the value of property. In the petition to which he had already referred, it was stated that the gross annual value of produce of the colony in 1846 was 3,500,000 dollars, or £700,000 sterling. Now, he believed he had shewn the value of all landed property in the country, taking the value of the estate to be £3,000, was £660,000. That was, the value of the sugar estates in the colony was only £660,000, while the produce of a year was £700,000. In fact, the landed property in this country was not worth one year's purchase!"

Nor does the moral condition of the colony appear much better than that of its finances. Again, read the evidence of Mr. Barkly in a despatch contained in the same volume from which I have taken the previous extracts.

"I have the honour to forward the usual District Returns from the Stipendiary Magistrates, for the half-year ending the 30th June last, together with the Consolidated Tables for the entire colony, marked respectively (A.), (B.), and (C.)

"Under almost every head there is, nevertheless, I regret to say, some unsatisfactory feature; as, for example, to commence with Table (A.), we find fewer baptisms and fewer marriages, fewer attendants either at church or chapel, fewer children at school, fewer labourers at work for hire. All this exhibits continued decadence in our social condition, and would fill my mind with alarm as to the future fate of the colony, were it not that there is at the same time a trifling improvement in one important particular, which encourages me to hope that a vigorous policy may yet prove successful in other respects as well as in this. This gleam of hope is to be traced under the head of "Crime," which,

it will be seen, has in some degree diminished in the face of the strenuous exertions made for its repression. The reduction in the number of "Prisoners," and in the "Total of Persons convicted of Offences," is not, it is true, very considerable; but I am happy to say, that it has continued to manifest itself during the period which has elapsed since these Returns were closed."

The condition of the negro population is one to which I shall hereafter take an opportunity of referring: my present object is simply to shew that the ruin of the proprietary class has not, as some sanguine philanthropists expected, been followed by a corresponding benefit to the labourer. In regard of the existence of distress, it may appear idle to add further confirmation of what is already so abundantly proved; but I cannot refrain from stating briefly the result of my own observations on the road between Georgetown, Demerara, and New Amsterdam, Berbice, a line of country which, as you know, comprises all the most productive and cultivated parts of the colony of Guiana.* After passing through four or five miles of land, still partially cleared, we entered a tract which bore little appearance of being in any way reclaimed from its primeval state of forest. The road was a mere foot track, barely passable for carriages of the lightest description, a circumstance which I name on the following account. By the colonial laws, as you are doubtless aware, every proprietor is bound to keep in repair so much of

* I insert in the Appendix (A) a brief summary of the changes which have taken place during the last few years in the value of property in Berbice.

the public highway as passes through his own estate ; failing to do this he is liable to fine, and if the fine remain unpaid the land is chargeable with the debt, and may ultimately be forfeited. Notwithstanding this supposed provision for enforcing the act, not an attempt had been made to comply with its terms : every single proprietor appeared equally in default, and on my naturally asking the reason of a seeming neglect on the part of the authorities, I was assured that the nominal owners of the estates through which we were passing had declined to incur any expense for properties which paid them nothing, and had thereby left it optional with the local government to reimburse themselves—if they could—by taking possession at once. It is needless to add, that what one party did not think worth retaining, the other did not think worth taking.

I was prepared for desolation, but not for what I saw. The whole road was lined with the ruins of houses and mills gone to decay ; not old ruins, made so by the lapse of time, but new and spacious dwellings deserted and overgrown with the dense vegetation of the tropics, sometimes wholly unroofed, and admitting the rain and sun, at others preserved from absolute dilapidation by the unauthorized occupation of a negro family, whom I more than once saw using the ornamented woodwork of the walls as fuel to boil their pot ; — the owner having meantime abandoned all care of his property, after perhaps an attempt to remove some of the more valuable machinery of the mill. In many instances, the difficulty and expense of procuring

labour, had induced him to relinquish even this; and costly engines, coppers, vacuum-chests, and all the elaborate apparatus of a boiling-house of the first class, had been left to rust among broken walls, rafters fallen in, and rooms tenanted only by owls and bats. Palm avenues and what were once shrubberies, bore witness to the former existence of cultivation; and the remains of a broad and high entrenchment on each side of a navigable canal, attested the expense formerly incurred in procuring an easy communication with the sea. We travelled many miles without meeting a human being,—each stage a repetition of the last, and the same evidences of former wealth and present poverty everywhere visible. Southward, beyond New Amsterdam, the high road leading to the settlements of the Courantyne Creek, was effectually barred by the breaking down of a bridge; this occurred more than a year ago, and nothing had been done to repair the damage, although no other communication exists by land, and the prevalence of the trade-wind makes the voyage westward exceedingly long and disagreeable. How the inhabitants of that part of the colony received their European letters, or indeed in any way communicated with the civilized world, I did not then ascertain, and have never been able to imagine.

Much of the soil along the coast had been originally reclaimed from the sea, and the dams having been left unrepaired, had given way, admitting the salt-water, and thereby rendering the land valueless for many years.

In farther illustration of the general state of the Colony, I may mention that having occasion to go by water to an estate still (nominally) in cultivation, on the banks of the Demerara River, I found that the pier at which produce, &c., was habitually shipped, had for some months been swept away by the stream, and that to land at all was a matter of considerable difficulty : nor were matters much better on reaching the residence of the proprietor, of which, though still inhabited, one half was literally a ruin, and the other temporarily patched up for present occupation. These things are trifles, but they would hardly have occurred in a country which was, as some writers in the public press have lately asserted the West Indies to be, in a condition of daily increasing prosperity.

The subjoined extract from a despatch by Lord Harris, dated April, 1848, has recently been quoted in the public press : but it exhibits a state of things so exactly parallel to that which I have attempted to shew as now existing in Guiana that I cannot here omit it.

“In reflecting on the depressed state of affairs in this colony, and on its prospects, which become daily more gloomy, I have endeavoured to discover whether some relief might not be afforded, some alleviation found, whereby the burden which now weighs down the planter might be lightened.

“It is sad and painful to behold men expecting ruin quickly to overtake them ; it is, perhaps, sadder and more painful to see them struggling and toiling against adversity, but with their energies dulled and their arms palsied, from the knowledge that their labours must be unremunerative, and that failure can be the sole result. It is most distressing to witness this, and at the same

time to be aware that much of the misery from which they are suffering, and that which awaits them, is of a nature which they are unable to avert by any acts of their own.

“It is pitiable to witness a fine colony daily deteriorating ; a land, enjoying almost every blessing under heaven, suffering from a shock from which it does not rally ; but the deepest pang of all, to an Englishman, is, to see the hearts and the affections of a whole population becoming gradually alienated from the country which he loves.”

From Trinidad I turn to Jamaica—the first in actual importance of the West Indian Colonies, though inferior as far as the cultivation of the cane is concerned, both in soil, climate, and facilities of transport. In that island a meeting has lately been held for the purpose of consulting on the best means of raising its inhabitants from their present deplorable condition. You will, perhaps, refuse to admit as literally accurate the expressions employed by a speaker addressing a public meeting : but the fact of a meeting having been convened for the purpose of providing a remedy for the public distress, is in itself an argument that such distress exists : and it will not fail to suggest itself to you, that a resident proprietor speaking to his own immediate neighbours, on matters in which all present are equally interested, and with which all are equally acquainted, cannot without the certainty of detection, indulge in misrepresentation of facts : even did not the known character of Mr. Hosack, one of the most skilful and experienced planters in the Colony, put any such supposition in his case wholly out of the question.

"Our position is much worse than that of the British Farmer, and totally different. It is enough to state that out of from *forty to fifty* sugar and coffee estates in St George, I could name about *six only* which are going on vigorously at this moment, and those, too, mainly with the help of captured Africans; *whilst by far the largest number are totally abandoned, with buildings in ruin, and fields in jungle.*"

St. George's, I may remark in passing, is in Jamaica what Norfolk or Suffolk are in England—the most carefully farmed, and, until of late years, the most productive district of the island. But St. George's does not stand alone. Another proprietor, also working his own estate, gives, in the following terms, the results of his own experience.

"I am myself, Gentlemen, one of those unfortunate coffee planters, whom the policy of the Government have completely ruined. My Friend, Mr. Hosack, has spoken of the numerous sugar estates totally abandoned in this parish; but I can go further as regards coffee plantations, and safely declare that *there is not at this moment a single coffee plantation* in this district in what would, in better times, have been called *cultivation*. I believe Jamaica's coffee crop is now reduced to about three millions of pounds, and if, Gentlemen, you ride from here up the Buff-Bay river, cross the ridge, and follow the Yallah's river down to Yallah's Bay on the south side, *nothing but ruin and abandoned properties meet your eye* in this once flourishing coffee district, and where the finest coffee in the world is grown, yet unrivalled in quality. But the oppressive policy of the Government has completely ruined it, and I feel persuaded that in a very few years coffee will cease to be enumerated among the exports of Jamaica."

Next to St. George's in point of cultivation, and considerably exceeding it in size, is the parish of Trelawney, larger by six acres than the Island of

Barbadoes, and cleared throughout almost its whole extent. I have before me a list of the estates in Trelawney, including in all eighty-six; of these forty-one only, or something less than one-half, have remained in the same hands since 1844, seventeen have been utterly abandoned, and gone to ruin; seventeen others have been sold, many, to my knowledge, at little more than one or two years purchase of their value previous to emancipation; and eleven are leased, principally to Negroes, by whom of course they are only cultivated for the purpose of supplying the market with yams, plantains, and such other fruits as cost little or no labour to raise. Nor is this by any means an extraordinary, or even an unfavourable sample of the general state of affairs throughout the colony, since much of the land in Trelawney is used for pasture, and thus remains to a certain extent productive; and the pimento, which grows there luxuriantly, (as it does along the whole line of the northern coast), has not yet attracted the notice of the Cuban proprietors.

An eminent merchant, now resident in Great Britain, writes to me as follows, stating his own experience of the value of Jamaica property:—

“ We purchased the Government mortgage over a property, with every prospect of obtaining a fair return by the application of capital in improvement, &c. but the low prices occasioned by the bill of 1846, made us suffer annually a heavy loss by the cultivation; we therefore determined to sell the property, and placed it in the market for a long time, without receiving a single offer; so in 1848 offered it back to Government for the sum we had paid, and interest thereon, although the property was im-

proved to double its original value, had the bill of 1846 not passed. Earl Grey, on the part of Government, declined to take it back; and after holding it another year at a further loss, we got it sold at a price which entails on us a loss of more than we paid to Government for the property."

And a parallel to his case is furnished in the following memorandum, which was put into my hands by a resident planter, in reply to my inquiries as to the value of property in his own immediate neighbourhood :—

"The following properties were lately purchased by Mr. George W. Gordon, a merchant of Kingston, lately a member of the Assembly.

"Cherry Garden Estate, in the parish of St. Andrew, netted in times of slavery, in one year, £11,000 sterling. Mr. Gordon bought it five years ago for £1650 sterling. Would now bring £800 at most.

"The Rhine Estate, in St. Thomas in the East. This property was sold at no very remote period for £50,000. Mr. Gordon bought it about two years ago for £4,200. The Rhine would now bring about £2,000.

"The Bog Estate, in the parish of Portland, said to have been worth £80,000. Mr. Gordon bought it I believe last year for £500.

"Muirton, in Portland, formerly worth about £30,000, was purchased (I believe last year) by the same gentleman for £500.

"All these estates are still carried on as sugar estates."

But it is needless to multiply proofs, of what is admitted on all hands. Even official men, unconnected with the land, supporters politically of the system under which the landed interest conceive themselves to be suffering, and pledged by the very nature of their position to take as sanguine a view of matters as the circumstances will allow, employ language, when describing the condition of the

colonists which is hardly exceeded by that of the complainants themselves.

Sir Charles Grey has opportunities for seeing and judging such as no other man enjoys. Placed in a situation of no ordinary difficulty—the personally popular administrator of a policy which all parties condemn, threatened daily by a local legislature, which seems inclined unfairly to visit the sins of the mother-country upon him—the Governor of Jamaica is not likely to be chargeable either with ignorance of the real necessities of the planters, or with undue partiality to their interests. Yet what is the official language employed by him no longer ago than last year?

“Of the public measures and proceedings of the Assembly during 1847, if I have not observed in them any comprehensive yet circumspect and prudent views adapted to the reconstruction and restoration of a colony undergoing the most trying changes of fortune and of social order, I feel that, on the other hand, extraordinary allowances are to be made even for the intemperate language and angry character of its discussions. The majority and dominant party consisted in that year, as it still does, of those who are called the planting interest, in which are included the mercantile and monied men, whose fortunes are closely connected and associated with those of the owners and the cultivators of the sugar and coffee estates. Several of these are sanguine, adventurous, energetic men, some far advanced in life, or past the prime of it; and when these, after seeing their schemes of fortune break down and their hopes fade away, with the blank prospect of almost hopeless ruin before them for themselves and for their families, have given way to passion or indulged in invectives, which themselves in calmer moments regret and condemn, I have observed such outbreaks with other feelings quite as strong as those of reprobation or surprise.”

With this remarkable admission I close so much of the case as goes to prove the nature and degree of the existing distress, adding only a fact which fell within my own observation. In passing through the parish of St. Ann's, and happening to converse with a resident on the subject of the property through which we were at the moment riding, I was assured by him that it contained 800 acres—was in great part cleared—was subject to no encumbrances—and was then in the market for the sum of £60! Though prepared to believe much, this statement was beyond my credulity: and it was not until, some three weeks later, I was told by a friend, who had accompanied me at the time, that he had actually become the purchaser at the stipulated price, that I could imagine what I had heard to be anything more than a fiction.

On one point I cannot speak circumstantially and in detail. The shifts and contrivances employed to ward off poverty by those on whom poverty came as an unexpected evil—the willingness evinced to shew hospitality where only of late years has the power been wanting—the situation of men, not absentees, not the nominal holders of estates encumbered above their value, but bona fide, working, resident land-owners, once in the enjoyment of all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life, now reduced to little more than its necessities, and even these possessed on an uncertain tenure—the helplessness of men unwilling to beg, and in a tropical climate (literally) unable to dig, yet bearing up, as

Englishmen only can, against the recollection of an unavailing struggle, and the prospect of a hopeless future—have left upon my mind recollections which will not lightly be effaced, but which I cannot hope to be able to convey to you, without enlarging on particulars by the disclosure of which individuals might be unnecessarily pained.

I do not wish to be understood as referring all these events which we in England deplore, but take no steps to remove, to the agency of the single measure of 1846. Such a position is not required for my argument nor would it be confirmed by facts. I admit, nay, I put it prominently forward, that great and general suffering existed both in the interval between the prospective emancipation of 1834 and the hasty termination of the apprenticeship in 1838, and subsequently, between that period and the passing of the law designated by Lord Brougham in Parliament as “An Act to encourage the importation of slaves from Africa.” That such an interval of suffering must necessarily be gone through was foreseen, expected, and, during a time, provided for by the Imperial Legislature. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? The sum voted as compensation money to the planters was never supposed at the time to be an equivalent in full for their loss. Commissioners were sent out to estimate the property about to be confiscated by Government. They returned its value at £43,000,000. But this was not all. It was well known that of the fixed capital invested in buildings, machinery, improvements of land, &c., a great part would be

rendered wholly unprofitable, while none would retain its former value. That amount of capital so depreciated has generally been stated as not less than £80,000,000; and looking at the incomes then derived from West Indian estates, there seems no reason to suppose the calculation erroneous. For the loss incurred on this enormous investment, no compensation whatever was proposed. Yet it was distinctly stated and understood that the Emancipation Act was founded on the principle of granting a full equivalent to the slave-holder for his loss, and of this there is the best possible evidence; for a different view was taken by the Abolitionist party, and to their proposals for depriving the planter, uncompensated, of his slaves, a steady and decided negative was returned. Moreover, it is utterly inconceivable, even had no testimony reached us on the subject, to suppose that a Government having once admitted the principle of paying for the slave property which they took away, should stop half way, and say, "We will give you fifty per cent, but no more." The view of the ultra-reformers, if extreme, was at least intelligible—they held that the ownership of human beings having been at all times, though not illegal, yet contrary to the laws of right, should not be acknowledged by the Legislature; and that in such case prescription carried with it no claim. But reject this proposition, as it was very properly rejected, and the alternative could only be to give compensation in full. I can understand what is meant by saying, "You had no right to hold this property from the

first, and therefore we shall take it away, and give you nothing in return :” but for a Minister to say, “ You had no right to this property, and we shall take advantage of that circumstance to drive a hard bargain with you, and get it at half price,” seems to imply either a somewhat confused notion of justice, or a not very reputable attempt to clothe extortion in the garb of humanity. What then is the inference? Parliament decided that the planters should be compensated : that decision can only be understood as implying that they should be compensated fully : such full compensation was confessedly not given in the shape of money paid down, and it could therefore only be given in that of a protective duty. There was certainly no distinct contract to that effect, but this circumstance only makes the case stronger. Who doubts that if in 1833 a single individual in either House of Parliament had hinted a doubt that slave-grown sugar might hereafter be admitted on equal terms with our own, we should have had pledges given, promises lavished, the good faith of the Government appealed to, and that with these promises and pledges would have been mingled no little indignation, and many taunts and sneers at the unworthy suspicion of which Ministers had been made the object? To say that no guarantee was offered is only to affirm that none was asked—that no suspicion was entertained—that Parliament for once was unanimous—and that in the continuance of that unanimity the colonists perhaps unwisely confided.

Had the point been disputed then, it would assuredly have been settled now : but it is a strange perversion of facts to maintain that what nobody in 1833 thought worth saying, because every body took it for granted, is to be treated in 1850 as though it had been a fancy too visionary for a moment to have entered the head of any public man.

If evidence is wanted to shew the animus of the Legislature at that period, it is enough to say that the one argument perpetually put forward by the opponents of emancipation throughout the whole course of the long and stormy debates which preceded the passing of that measure, was the danger of so far decreasing cultivation in the British West Indies, as to make it a matter of necessity to import from foreign countries. The Duke of Wellington, speaking in the House of Lords, (June 25, 1833), pointedly adverted to the possibility of such a catastrophe :—

“ There was another view of this part of the subject, which he thought deserving of the serious consideration of their Lordships. Suppose the growth of sugar should, from the causes above-mentioned, fail in the West Indies, where were they to get sugar? We must get it, no doubt, from the colonies of other countries, in which it was produced by slave-labour. This was an hypothesis, which he thought well deserved the attention of those who were most anxious to abolish slavery. There could be no doubt that until we should be enabled to import sugar from countries which could raise it by free labour, we must be content to take it from those which raised it by slave-labour. What, he would ask their Lordships, would be the inevitable result? Would it not be the renewal of the slave trade, with all

the added horrors of its being carried on in a contraband manner ; and could any one, who seriously desired to put an end to slavery, contemplate with calmness such a result of his exertions ?”

What is the argument here ? “ If you cannot produce sugar enough by free labour, it is better to raise it by slave-labour in your own colonies, than by slave-labour elsewhere.” And what was the answer ? Not a denial of the truth of this abstract proposition ; but a long series of reasonings intended to demonstrate the impossibility of this hypothetical case ever becoming a reality. The idea of admitting foreign slave-grown produce, not in lieu of, not to replace, but to compete with that of the British Colonies, never appears to have been as much as alluded to on either side of either House.

Such then was the opinion of Parliament at that time ; and if it be argued that Parliament has no right to bind posterity : my answer is, that Parliament does so every day. What is the National Debt but a contract binding on posterity ? And is not the debt incurred by Emancipation a parallel case ? It was undesirable, indeed impossible, to discharge it at once ; to buy up not merely the slaves themselves but also the estates which the want of those slaves would consign to abandonment ; neither would such a proceeding have answered its object, inasmuch as a decrease of sugar cultivation at home would have driven us to the foreign market. What remained ? To help the planter over his immediate difficulties : to supply him largely with labour, thereby doing all in the power of Government to check the tendency towards an exorbi-

tantly high rate of wages : and having ascertained what amount of protection would enable him to compete successfully with the slave-holder, to grant that amount, and no more. In this sense, the establishment of the African Squadron was an economical measure ; for by crushing the Slave Trade and consequently raising the price of slaves in foreign countries, it placed the colonist on terms of greater equality with his rival, and thus admitted of a nearer approximation of duties. Laws encouraging immigration were to have been passed, conducing still farther to approximate the position of the competing parties : and by these triple means, (1) stopping the supplies of Brazilian and Cuban labour ; (2) increasing the population of the British West Indies ; and (3) making up the difference which might still remain in the cost of production out of our own pockets ;—a fair prospect seemed to be opened of carrying to a successful issue the great experiment which had been so unanimously undertaken. It is not the least singular result of the present disorganized state of political parties, that of the three measures here named, each forming a part of one comprehensive scheme, in their union so valuable, so worthless when separated—the Government should within the present session have staked their ministerial existence on the continuance of one—to the second have evinced an indifference which the complaints of the colonies have done little to remove—and should now be prepared to exert all their energies in opposition to the third and most important of all.

This then forms the sum of the charge which I bring against the promoters of the Act of 1846 : not that they originally caused the difficulties in which the West Indian planters are now involved : not that they created the distress, much of which, though not all, may doubtless be traced back to the period of emancipation : but that they have made that permanent, which need not have been more than temporary : that they have aggravated the disease, and taken away the remedy : that they have abandoned the case as hopeless at the very time when the patient was in a fair way towards recovery : and encouraged those who trusted in them to struggle against formidable obstacles, only to bar their progress at last by one which must prove insuperable to their utmost efforts. The immediate result of the abolition of slavery was exactly what might have been expected—a great depreciation in the value of Colonial property. To meet this public money was granted ; cultivation went on, the apprenticeship system worked well, and apparently because it did so work well, and because the negroes were not yet reduced to a state of entire and absolute idleness, Government interfered again, and without even pleading the excuse of necessity for the deliberate violation of their contract, struck off the remaining term of servitude. To illustrate the working of this measure, I need only remark, that the services of apprentices being transferable under certain conditions, were matters of bargain and sale : in 1837, a planter—call him A

—having 100 apprentices, sold their labour from that time forth to the expiration of their apprenticeship, to his neighbour B, who purchased under the belief that he was acquiring a right to three years of that labour : of these three years the legislature unexpectedly took away two, and paid him not a shilling in-return ! Nay, often the negro himself was the sufferer : and I well remember the case of an intelligent coloured man in Demerara, who, by extra hours of labour had saved up enough to purchase his entire freedom, which he did just a month before the passing of the Act which freed every one : the result of his industry being, to cause him to expend the accumulation of years in buying that which a few weeks later was given away gratis. To this singular piece of legislation I allude here, only as furnishing a sufficient explanation of the continuance of distress—or, rather of the renewal of a distress which had almost ceased to exist, long after the first shock of the change from freedom to slavery had passed over. I allude to it in order to shew, that it furnishes no answer to the arguments which I draw from the present depression of West Indian property, to say that such depression is not unprecedented. 1834—1838—were each in turn heavy blows to the West Indian interest ; from the first of these we have evidence enough to shew that they did to a great extent recover : and the few facts which I shall now proceed to give, will make it not less evident, that between 1838 and 1846 their condition was one of progressive im-

provement. Sir Henry Light, to whose picture of Guiana in 1848 I have adverted above, says, with reference to that same colony in April 1845 :—

“ Agriculture, commerce, institutions, appear to be placed in the road to success. There has been a crisis passed, probably the severest that could have happened, yet under whatever head inquiry is made on the state of the colony, there is a marked improvement to be observed : In finance, the currency has been settled suitable to West India transactions with the different states of North and South America, and in compliance with the instructions of Her Majesty’s Government, and which will facilitate the speedy introduction of the currency of the mother country. The union of the estimates of Berbice with that of Demerara and Essequibo, has reduced the imposts on the planters of that country from four and a half per cent to one per cent, now the rate on agricultural produce. The treasury is overflowing, large wants provided for, while taxation is diminished. In institutions, hospitals, collegiate and other schools, useful societies formed for the benefit of commerce, agriculture, and science. In population, increase from natural causes, with an excess of female births over males in the rural districts. In health, yellow-fever rare, dirt-eating, yaws and dysentery disappearing. In morality, there is every reason to believe that religious and moral instruction will soon place this on a par with populous countries in Europe. In places of worship everywhere multiplied, with a great addition to the ministry. In internal traffic, carried to every door. In villages and freeholds, rising from east to west of the province and already in existence, whose inhabitants are not lost to the cultivation of the staples, and are daily assuming a higher degree of civilization. In repression of crime, a well-disciplined police, detached in every district, leaving crime no refuge, and rarely failing to discover the offender, while the penal settlement produces a wholesome terror in those disposed to commit offences. And lastly, in the prospects of the colony, those of increasing crops and commerce. When in addition to the above remarks, it is considered that the rivers and creeks flow so advantageously as to admit of an inland water communication from the Corantyne

to the Orinoco by short canals of union of one river or creek or the other, we may confidently expect that under the fostering hand of the mother country, this province will yearly become more valuable."

Again :—

"You state that in the year 1845 the colony of British Guiana was in a very flourishing condition ?—Yes.

"Has it since that time been gradually decreasing in prosperity ? —From the moment that you had the money crisis in England, and the low prices of sugar began, it began to decline."

And this opinion is fully borne out by the following instances of sums given for estates after the termination of the apprenticeship. The confidence of the planters in the ultimate prosperity of the Colony is sufficiently indicated by the amount of capital invested :—

"In 1838 *Le Resouvenir* was bought by Mr. Tinne for £19,000 cash, he assuming a debt due by the estate amounting to £9,844.

"In 1841 the produce of the estate having reduced the debt to £4,947, Mr. Tinne sold it for £27,000 cash.

"In 1838 Messrs. Sandbach bought *Anna Catharina* for £24,000 ; having expended nearly £3,000 in improvements they sold one third of the estate to a gentleman resident in the colony for £9,000 in the year 1841.

"In August 1840, the following two estates were sold by public auction : *Montrose* for £38,000, *Ogle* for £26,500, (*Bel Air* for £20,000. by private sale). All three cash in twelve months from the day of sale."

Assuredly not one tenth of the prices here mentioned would be paid for any single estate in Guiana now. I have touched upon this point because it seems to shew that the condition of the West Indies has not been, as is often supposed, one

of continued and unvarying depression, but that on the contrary, whenever the interference of the British Government has been removed, they have risen again rapidly to their former state of prosperity. That from the blow now inflicted upon them they cannot so revive—that the limit of endurance has been passed, and that unaided by the Legislature, they must fail in this last struggle, will form a subsequent part of my argument.

II. But before I endeavour to shew whose fault it is, that three-fourths of the West Indian planters are at this moment in a state approaching absolute ruin, it may be worth while to refer to some few of the charges so frequently brought against them, by way of proving that their sufferings are the consequences of their own misdeeds. Why such a cry should have been raised it is easy enough to see. They are impoverished, and have, therefore, ceased to possess influence: they have been unsuccessful, when success is often taken as a test of merit. There are many people in this country who believe, and still more who profess to believe, that hardly any man can be ruined except by his own fault. The presumption arising from failure is against them. They have many enemies and few friends. Their own injudicious conduct in resisting emancipation, conduct of which their successors now see the folly, but which whoever places himself in their position must admit, if unreasonable, to have been not unnatural, is visited on the next generation. And moreover, as it is confessedly impossible that a large body of intelligent and

wealthy Englishmen, in a time of profound peace, should have been reduced to poverty without somebody—themselves or others—being to blame, the British public, who decide the cause, are in fact the parties most interested in the verdict. Every one knows, that there is no more common subterfuge of the murderer on his trial, than to endeavour to prove his victim a suicide.

“The planters are absentees.” Undoubtedly ; and as long as their incomes enable them to reside in England, it is not likely that they will be otherwise. Europeans do not live under a tropical sun, debarred alike from the exercises of country life, and the resources of a great city, injuring their constitutions, weakening their bodily powers, and with the loss of those powers losing also the energy of mind, which distinguishes them at home, without some valid reason of necessity or of profit. Nor am I disposed to deny that in many, perhaps in most cases, their estates would be benefited by their presence. But can we expect them to become *bonâ fide* settlers ? Is it desirable that they should do so ? I doubt it : and for this reason. Though the traveller in a tropical colony is repeatedly thrown in contact with men who will assure him that the climate is perfectly healthy—that it is nonsense to talk of life being shorter there than in England—that they have never been ill in their lives, &c. &c.—yet he has to remember that these old residents are the exceptions, and not the rule ; and that while most of those who remain in the country will agree in the same story, he has seen or

heard nothing of the far more numerous class who, having resided a few years, and failed to endure the change, have either found themselves under the necessity of returning to England, or of taking a still longer and more inevitable journey. Very few Europeans can take up their abode permanently in the West Indies, without at least some intervals of residence in a colder climate. With the Cuban planter the case is different; yet the Cuban planter, settled all the year round at the Havannah, sees hardly more of his estate than the Englishman. But, even supposing that after many years and frequent deaths, a race of British proprietors had become permanent residents in Jamaica or Guiana, and thereby accustomed to the climate, I believe the change would not be found beneficial. In fact, the process of acclimation to an Englishman necessarily involves the loss of his European energies, and an approximation to the bodily condition of the people among whom he lives. There is even now a large Creole population of white descent: and assuredly their best friends will not say of them, that in energy or industry they approach the natives of the north. I have myself seen Americans from the United States, not the most naturally indolent of men, settled in the cities of the Spanish Main, and after long residence hardly distinguishable in point of activity from the people among whom they lived.

On this ground then, I doubt the advantage as well as the possibility of establishing in the West

Indies a class of resident English landowners ; and I utterly and altogether deny the assertion that the unproductive nature of West Indian property is owing to the absenteeism of its owners.

But another line of attack is sometimes taken.—It is not so much the absence of landowners from their properties, we are told, as the waste that takes place upon them,—which prevents their attaining their proper value in the market. It is difficult to reconcile these two charges with one another : still more difficult to understand how the latter should ever have been received. In what is this reputed extravagance to shew itself ? It would be a difficult matter for an agent or overseer living on an estate in the country, isolated from his neighbours, occupied with the practical details of superintendence, and probably at a considerable distance from the capital of the colony, to live expensively if he wished it. The land supplies him with almost all that he requires ; he obtains the necessaries of life without paying for them, and the luxuries he would not find it easy to obtain at all. This, however, is a simple matter of observation and of fact ; and I will only say that during a journey which occupied several weeks in Jamaica, and in which I visited a large proportion of the best cultivated estates in the island, I never saw any of these signs of lavish or careless expenditure by agents or overseers,—which having possibly occurred to a certain extent in days long previous to emancipation, have now been revived as a subject of attack against a class

whose reduced means alone suffice to vindicate their character in this respect.*

One point more remains to be examined before I take leave of this part of the subject. A great deal of stress has been laid—and not unnaturally—on the circumstance of the exports from the British West Indies having increased during the last two years: as affording fair ground for presuming that the colonists have already begun to recover from their alarm. Now this appears to me by no means a just conclusion. In the first place, there is no crop of which the quantity is so little likely to be immediately influenced by the price which it fetches, as that of the cane. Eighteen months are required for its production. It remains longer in the ground than any other plant cultivated for consumption. The inference, therefore, whatever it may be worth, to be drawn from the present supply, applies to the year 1848, and not to 1850. But in truth that inference is worth little or nothing: and for an obvious reason. We all know the uncertainty attendant on agricultural operations in England: in the tropical colonies that uncertainty is multiplied tenfold. A hurricane may destroy in a few hours the whole crop of an island. Long-continued droughts sometimes make it necessary in Jamaica to plant and replant three or four times

* This subject being fully discussed in an extract from one of the leading journals of Jamaica, in reply to an article which appeared some time last year in the Daily News, I have added it in the Appendix. (B.)

over. And while in England a difficulty of procuring labour by paying a fair price for it is a thing unheard of, the proprietor of a West Indian estate knows well, and often to his cost, the uncertain tenure on which he holds his supply of working hands. All these circumstances taken together, afford evidence that a much longer series of years is required to establish an average of profits or losses, when dealing with tropical agriculture, than in the case of the farmer at home. Yet seven years is held to be the shortest term on which a fair valuation of the average price of wheat can be based ; and recollecting that the crop which was put into the ground in the winter of 1846, cannot possibly have affected the markets until the spring of 1848, and that we are now in the summer of 1850, it does seem that the intervening two years and a quarter form rather too narrow a basis on which to rest a permanent calculation as to the rate at which sugar can be produced, leaving a fair remuneration to the grower.

But I am prepared to prove much more than this. What if the great body of the planters throughout the British West Indies have for some time past been producing at a loss ? What if they have been selling below prime cost ? Political economists say that the moment a trade ceases to be profitable, it is discontinued ; but we have all seen examples which tend to prove that this, however true in the long run, is not immediately or strictly so. Take an instance with which everybody is familiar. How

often a line of coaches will continue to run, long after some neighbouring railroad has reduced their profits to nothing! The reason is clear. Men who have sunk a large capital in any undertaking are naturally unwilling to abandon it. They prefer putting up with a few failures to sacrificing their whole investment. It may often be worth their while to go on losing money for four or five successive years, rather than by throwing up their business to deprive themselves of the chance of gaining by better times. And this is more peculiarly the case on a West Indian property than on any other; for there to discontinue cultivation during three or four years, causes as great an expense in renewing it as would be required to clear fresh land. A field left fallow for even a twelvemonth, would probably be three feet deep in jungle at the end of that time. The proprietor has therefore only two alternatives, either at once and for ever to abandon his estate, or to go on working it at whatever loss, hoping for a future rise in prices. I have already shewn you how often the first course has been pursued: I will now give instances of the latter, premising that they are merely selected at random, from a number of similar and equally convincing proofs, which are at this moment in my possession. Having been permitted to copy them from the books of the proprietors, I am enabled to warrant their authenticity.

1. On the M—— estate (Jamaica), in 1846, the account was as follows:—

Outlay.

	<i>£.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Expended in labour	1220	6	9
Salaries	206	5	5
Repairs and other contingent expenses	605	0	6
Total	2031	12	8
The net proceeds of the crop were	1980	7	5½
Balance against the owner	51	5	2½

2. On same estate, in 1847.

Labour account	1463	8	0
Salaries	87	2	6
Contingencies	449	4	11
Total outlay	1999	15	5
Net proceeds of crop	1261	12	4
Balance against owner	738	3	1

3. Same estate, (1848.)

Labour account	1387	1	11
Salaries	123	11	3
Contingencies	487	5	5½
Total outlay	1997	18	7½
Produce sold	1642	11	5
Balance against owner	355	7	2½

4. On another estate in the same neighbourhood the accounts stood in 1846.

Rent	250	0	0
Labour	1607	10	9
Salaries	183	7	11
Contingencies	443	19	10
Total outlay	2484	18	6
Produce sold	2311	5	4
Leaving balance against owner	173	13	2

5. Same estate, (1847.)			
	£.	s.	d.
Rent	250	0	0
Labour	1796	15	0
Salaries	127	12	5
Contingencies	486	9	10
Total outlay	2660	17	3
Produce sold	2226	8	1
Balance against owner	434	9	2

6. Same estate, (1848.)			
Rent	250	0	0
Labour	1312	12	6
Salaries	161	2	2
Contingencies	525	5	5½
Total outlay	2249	0	1½
Produce sold	1327	16	7
Balance against owner	921	3	6½

7. On a third estate also in the same parish, the account stood in 1846 as follows.

Labour	1088	2	3½
Salaries	236	16	9
Contingencies	1478	18	7½
Total outlay	2803	17	8
Produce sold	1806	10	1
Balance against owner	997	7	7

8. Same estate, (1847.)			
Labour	1920	8	4
Salaries	194	11	8
Contingencies	542	14	4½
Total outlay	2657	14	4½
Produce sold	2834	0	11½
Balance in favour of owner	176	6	7

9. Same estate, (1848).

	£.	s.	d.
Labour . . .	2073	15	4
Salaries . . .	218	16	2½
Contingencies . . .	1016	19	7½
Total outlay . . .	3309	11	2
Produce sold . . .	2834	0	11½
Balance against owner . . .	475	10	2½

10. On another estate, leased by the same party,
the account stood in 1846 :

Rent . . .	300	0	0
Labour . . .	1248	0	0
Salaries . . .	184	19	4½
Contingencies . . .	399	15	1½
Total outlay . . .	2132	14	5½
Produce sold for . . .	2829	2	6
Balance in favour of tenant . . .	696	6	0½

11. Same estate, (1847).

Rent . . .	300	0	0
Labour . . .	1336	12	0½
Salaries . . .	196	17	9
Contingencies . . .	306	8	0½
Total outlay . . .	2139	17	10
Produce sold . . .	2402	19	1
Balance in favour of tenant . . .	263	1	3

12. Same estate, (1848.)

Rent . . .	300	0	0
Labour . . .	1349	19	1½
Salaries . . .	245	0	0
Contingencies . . .	582	14	6½
Total outlay . . .	2377	13	7½
Produce sold for . . .	1806	8	11½
Balance against tenant . . .	571	4	7½

With the proprietors and lessees of the respective estates above-mentioned, I was personally acquainted: they were in each case residents, well acquainted with the Colony, practically brought up to their business, and managing their own affairs.

I shall now lay before you a similar abstract of the books of an estate in Hanover, Jamaica, still under cultivation, and on which the owner has passed, I believe, the last ten years without quitting the island.

Estate's Transactions for Crop 1842.

<i>August 1st.</i>	<i>Dr.</i>	<i>Cr.</i>
To Amount of Labourers Wages . . .	£1658 11 9½	
„ do. Island Contingencies, viz. Salaries,		
Taxes, Stock, Lumber, &c.	1872 11 7½	
„ do. English Supplies from Liverpool . . .	162 14 10	
„ do. do. do. from Bristol	260 9 9	
By Amt. for Produce sold in Country,		
£516 0 4½		
„ do. for old Cattle	103 12 3	
„ do. for Rents	263 7 9½	
		883 0 5
By Sales of 12 Hhds. Sugar p. “Murray” in		
Liverpool		265 1 3
„ do. 50 „ „ p. “Retrieve”		
in Liverpool		1013 2 9
„ do. 10 Phns. Rum p. do.		
in Liverpool		123 13 7
„ do. 20 Hhds. Sugar p. “Wm. Thomp-		
son” Bristol		447 3 3
„ do. 13 „ „ do.		
Bristol		244 13 7
„ do. 5 Hhds. Sugar and 10 Phns. Rum		
p. “Marlbro’” in London		212 13 10
„ 10 Phns. Rum sold in Country to G. R.		
Ruthven & Co.		252 15 0
By Balance down		512 4 4
	£3954 8 0	3954 8 0

Transactions for Crop 1843.

<i>August 1st.</i>	<i>Dr.</i>	<i>Cr.</i>
To Amt. of Labourers' Wages	1371 5 10	
„ do. Island Contingencies, viz. Salaries, Taxes, Stock, Lumber, &c.	1087 9 8½	
„ do. English Supplies in Liverpool	188 14 11	
„ do. do. do. Bristol	92 3 0	
By Amt. of Produce sold in the Country		575 19 7
„ do. for Old Cattle and Rents		261 10 0½
By Sales 15 Hhds. Sugar p. "Murray" in Liverpool		330 3 2
„ do. 27 do. do. p. "Courier" in Liverpool		545 16 10
„ do. 3 do. do. p. "Mersey" in Liverpool		54 8 10
„ do. 15 do. do. p. "Wm. Thomp- son" Bristol		322 1 8
„ do. 15 Phns. Rum p. "Courier" in Liverpool		210 18 6
„ do. Old Copper		78 5 5
By Balance down		360 9 5
	<u>£2739 13 5½</u>	<u>2739 13 5½</u>

Transactions for Crop 1844.

To Amt. of Labourers' Wages	1369 11 5½	
„ do. Island Contingencies, viz. Salaries Taxes, Stock, Lumber, &c.	1003 19 0½	
„ do. English Supplies in Liverpool	172 4 5	
„ do. do. do. in Bristol	39 3 9	
By Amount of Produce sold in the Country		625 0 5
„ do. Rents, &c.		157 17 3
By Sales of 15 Hhds. Sugar p. "Mars" in Liverpool		207 1 11
„ do. 50 do. do. p. "Barbadian" in Liverpool		889 11 11
„ do. 15 do. do. p. "Wm. Thomp- son" Bristol		325 6 9
„ do. 10 Phns. Rum p. "Mars" in Liverpool		176 14 3
By Balance down		203 6 2
	<u>£2584 18 8</u>	<u>2584 18 8</u>

Transactions for Crop 1845.

<i>August 1st.</i>	<i>Dr.</i>	<i>Cr.</i>
To Amt. paid Labourers' Wages	1091 15 9	
„ do. of Island Contingencies, viz. Salaries, Taxes, Stock, Lumber, &c.	928 17 5½	
„ do. of English Supplies from Liverpool	196 2 5	
„ do. do. do. from Bristol	34 0 0	
By Sales of 15 Hhds. Sugar p. "Wm. Thompson," Bristol		256 10 0
„ do. of 25 do. do. p. "Mersey," in Liverpool		508 16 1
„ do. 10 do. do. p. "Glen Huntly," in Liverpool		214 3 2
„ do. 18 do. do. p. "Fairfield," in Liverpool		385 1 11
„ do. 4 do. do. p. "Lawrence," in Liverpool		90 14 7
„ do. 10 Phns. Rum, p. "Glen Huntly," in Liverpool		141 13 11
„ do. 10 do. do. p. "Sophia," in London		159 1 11
„ Amt. for Produce sold in the Country		357 11 7½
„ do. for Rents and Old Cattle		79 4 6
By Balance down		57 17 1½
	<u>£2250 15 7½</u>	<u>2250 15 7½</u>

Transactions for Crop 1846.

To Amt. paid Labourers' Wages	1333 1 4	
„ do. of Island Contingencies, viz. Salaries, Taxes, Stock, Lumber, &c.	1120 6 1	
„ do. of English Supplies from Liverpool	159 16 9	
„ do. do. do. from Bristol	34 0 0	
By Sales of 56 Hhds. Sugar, p. "Fairfield," in Liverpool		1013 15 2
„ do. 1 do. do. p. do. do.		16 16 0
„ do. 25 do. do. p. "Murray," in Liverpool		521 2 2
„ do. 20 Phns. Rum, p. "Fairfield," in Liverpool		310 12 1

Crop 1846— <i>continued</i> .		Dr.	Cr.
By Sales of	1 Phn. Rum, p. "Murray," in		
	Liverpool		15 9 4
„ do.	10 do. do. p. "Ruby," in		
	London		166 5 0
„ 1 Phn. Rum, p. "Ruby," in London, not			
	yet sold		14 10 0
„ Amt. for Produce sold in Country			290 12 0
„ do. for Rents and Old Cattle			68 11 10
By Balance down			229 10 7
		<u>£2647 4 2</u>	<u>£2647 4 2</u>

To Balance down Transactions 1842	512 4 4
„ do. do. do. 1843	360 9 5
„ do. do. do. 1844	203 6 2
„ do. do. do. 1845	57 17 1½
„ do. do. do. 1846	229 10 7
	<u>1363 7 7½</u>
To Balance against the Estate on Transaction 1847	1115 19 6
	<u>£2479 7 1½</u>

Total loss in six years' Transactions, £2479 7s. 1½d.

It is impossible to read such a statement as this, without perceiving that the present condition of the planter is one which cannot last. Here are men who for years past have been selling at a loss—giving away their goods, and paying their expenses out of their capital. I dwell upon this point, because it appears to me fully to establish a very important proposition, namely, that the fact of British grown sugar being sold, during a limited period, at a very low price, is no proof whatever

that at that price it can be produced ; and that many of the sales which have recently been effected are of the nature of those which take place when a bankrupt's effects are put up to auction. The cheapness of the goods, so far from being an indication of prosperity and command of capital on the part of the producer, serves only to shew how great must be his necessities, when he has no alternative but to take the first offer that is made him.

III. I now turn to the third part of the argument, and shall endeavour to shew that the losses of the colonist are an inevitable result of the unequal competition to which he is exposed. The possibility of free labour competing in an open market with the enforced tasks performed under the eye of a Cuban overseer, appears on the face of it a sufficiently improbable hypothesis. In answer, it would be almost enough to say, that one of two propositions must be true : either the slave is worked harder for a less remuneration than the freeman, or he is not. If the latter, then emancipation was useless, and the condition of the negro previous to 1833, was not inferior to his present state : an inference, which, however legitimately deduced from the premises, is not likely to be admitted. If the other assumption be taken as the correct one, either the difference so lost by the negro, goes into the pockets of the planter, or it must be assumed that the work done is inferior in quality or amount. Previous to the actual experiment being tried, the latter theory was not unfrequently put forward ; how erroneously, I leave it

to any one who has seen the respective proportions of labour on a Cuban and a British West Indian estate, to judge for himself. Of course it is easy and plausible to assert, that no man works so well as when working for his own profit: that the hope of raising himself in the social scale is among the strongest incentives by which the human mind can be actuated: and to point to the English or American labourer as a proof of a somewhat hastily drawn conclusion. But in practice it has invariably been found, that so far from having advanced since the days of the apprenticeship, the negro labourer has on the whole retrograded (*vide* Lord Grey's despatch, quoted above); that indolence, not industry, has been the result of his freedom; that the task performed by him is not one half of what his strength would enable him to accomplish in an easy day's work; and that for this service, such as it is, he demands a price which would be deemed exorbitant in any other part of the world. Nor can it be contended that there is any counterbalancing superiority in the manner of performance: for in almost every process of sugar manufacture, physical strength alone is required; and the few departments where skill and experience come into play, are generally filled, even in slave countries, by white men hired for the purpose. With regard to the quantity of work exacted on the Cuban sugar estate, there can be no more trustworthy evidence than that of Mr. Turnbull, many years a Commissioner at the Havannah, and whose official situation gave him means of access to

all parts of the interior, not enjoyed by ordinary travellers. Speaking of an estate which he visited, Mr. Turnbull says :—

“The season of comparative ease was now drawing to a close, and the crop season was approaching, when, according to the admission of the mayoral, only four hours, or at most four hours and a half, out of the twenty-four were allowed for sleep. A similar statement made to me on the first estate I visited was so startling, that I was obliged to suspend my belief. As it was everywhere admitted, however, and even here at Santa Anna was spoken of without disguise, as a regular system on an estate which, by common consent, was allowed to be managed with unexampled consideration and humanity, I was at length compelled to yield my reluctant belief.”*

And again, p. 289.

“Of all the tortures inflicted on the poor negro, the smallness of the modicum of sleep allowed him was what puzzled me the most at the commencement of my inquiries, and in the end excited the most painful emotions. The injunction of the Roman slave master, although by birth a Spaniard, seems never to have reached the minds of his descendants ; at least it does not affect their practice in the New World—

“Detur aliquando otium quiesque fessis.”—SENECA.

The cultivation of coffee is not equally laborious: but I very much doubt whether any amount of wages, however high, would induce the negro of the British West Indies to undergo even the comparatively easy service here described.

“The work within doors, in ease and lightness to the labourer, is equally in favour of the *cafetal*. The watching and skimming of the liquor in the boiling house, the turning it over with great spoons or ladles from one copper to another, and the feeding and attendance on the fires, have no sort of parallel in the turn-

* Turnbull's Travels in Cuba, p. 286.

ing over of the coffee, or in submitting it when it is sufficiently dry to the machinery by which its husk is to be removed. Accordingly, it appears that while nineteen and a half or twenty hours' labour are expected from the unfortunate negro whose master is a grower and manufacturer of sugar, the more moderate quota of sixteen or perhaps fifteen hours a day are all that is required, if the owner of the slave be also the proprietor of a coffee plantation. The natural consequence inevitably follows, that while the sugar-making slave, beginning his labours at sixteen or eighteen years of age, has certainly on an average not more than ten years to live, the coffee-picking slave may fairly reckon on twenty-five or thirty years, without ever having endured the same severity of toil or the same intensity of suffering. Nay, the coffee-picking gang are not expected or required to produce on an average more than fifteen, or at most twenty quintals a head; while the sugar-making gang must be whipped up to the average of ten boxes a head, which will weigh at least thirty quintals."*

There is nothing in this description written ten years ago, which is not equally true at the present day, except that the stimulus given to agriculture has somewhat increased the number of the estates, and enabled the proprietors to introduce into them the latest improvements in machinery.

In confirmation of the above, Mr. Crawford, writing from Cuba (February 1848), gives the following statement:—

"There are, I believe, no statistics comprehending all the items necessary to judge of the duration of the negro slave's life in this island.

"Some six or eight years ago, all opinions are concurrent that the waste of life amongst the slaves was much greater than it is now.

"It was then terrific, and has been as great as 10 per cent:

* Turnbull's Travels in Cuba, p. 293.

upon some estates in a single crop time, without the occurrence of malignant disease or epidemic; and the deaths of infants are rarely noticed.

"Upon such estates the mortality is still very great, arising from the ill-treatment, over-working, bad food, scantily supplied, and the want of sufficient clothing; but the prices of slaves having risen so considerably, their usage is becoming lessened, and where they are in numbers sufficient for the work they are found to live much longer. The mortality is as little as two and a half per cent, and from up to five, under such favourable circumstances; but it varies from the most lamentable causes, and, as I have said before, is as much as ten per cent in certain situations."

And the despatch of Mr. Cowper, Consul at Pernambuco, points to a similar condition of the labour-market there.

"The average price of a slave labourer is about Rs. 450,000, or £50. 12s. 6d. This price has probably remained stationary for many years, since the prohibition indeed of the African slave trade in 1831, prior to which period it was infinitely lower, as low as Rs. 100. The average duration of life in a young healthy black employed in sugar cultivation is not more than ten or fifteen years of such labour, and even this is an increase in the ratio that he has become more valuable to his master; but it is shocking to contemplate, that in the finest climate in the world, and one peculiarly suited to the black man's constitution, circumstances should curtail his days by one-half; for it can be denied neither that the Engenho black seldom reaches thirty-five years, or that the rest of the adult population live to advanced ages, their average time of existence being little less than seventy years."

Now contrast the descriptions given above (and for the general accuracy of all except the last, I am personally ready to vouch) with another, equally faithful, of the means at the disposal of the planter in our own possessions. Whether the author of a recent work entitled "Eight years in Guiana," and

describing the struggles of a proprietor in that Colony, be relating the results of his own experience or that of others, his sketch is equally life-like and correct.

“They could not, (says a manager, describing the present race of labourers), bring themselves to work continuously, and when they were in the field, no threat nor punishment in the power of any one to inflict, could induce them to execute their task with that nice attention which tropical agriculture, and especially the culture of the cane, requires; and it appears doubtful to him, whether the mere abstraction of their former quota of labour, or the slovenly scratching work now obtained, operated most injuriously for the planter. They both have a direct tendency to diminish the production of the land, and in that way had jointly resulted in a general loss of crop for the bygone year, of fully one moiety. On the Fortune, nearly one half of the former population had gone away. In fact, on almost every estate, there was a general upheaving of society, the ties by which it was kept together in other days having been broken asunder, and a restless desire for change, in hopes of still further improving their condition, taking possession of the labouring population. Many a planter relied on former attachment, fostered by kind treatment; but a child remembers not such associations, and can the negro, with his puerile mental development, be actuated by them?”*

And again (p. 39) in a conversation between two planters, the same question is discussed.

“The prospect is darkening in regard to labour; the total want of subordination naturally arising out of a deficiency, is becoming a concomitant as bad as the monster evil that creates it.” “That,” I said, “naturally follows; when a labourer becomes so valuable that you are under the necessity of conciliating him, how is it possible that anything like subordination can exist?” “True, certainly,” replied Mr. Ridley, “but there is a wanton disregard

* Eight years in British Guiana, p. 17.

to rule among them now, which shows the child out of school, or, if you will, the dog out of the chain—they manifest a degree of exultation in being able to set at defiance the regulations of the estate. Two days ago, a fellow stood up in my cane field, stretched himself out, called aloud that all might hear, ‘dis ha work no good, me da go fish, O!’ and straightway shouldering his shovel, marched off; a few of the rest gazed at him for a short space, and one by one followed him. When the bulk of the gang saw what was going on, each man followed the example of the leader, just like a flock of sheep after the first who takes the leap, and in half an hour there was not one left in the field.” “That is a singular feature in their character,” said I; “if one of them quits his work from any cause whatever connected with the labour in hand; they are all sure to go; they seem to think it degrading to remain if one refuses to continue at the task: a stranger would imagine they were all going to fish, whereas not one but the ring-leader would think of it, and perhaps not even he.”

Of the frequent occurrence of scenes like that described above, every one who has passed even a few weeks in the West Indies, can furnish some proof at once ludicrous and painful.*

But upon this head there can be no evidence

* I may be excused for mentioning one which took place within my own observation, and which seems to illustrate what I have here said. A party had been made to ascend one of the rivers of Guiana, and a crew hired for the purpose. In their charge our boat was left during a period of some two hours, which we passed in examining the estates along the banks. On our returning they had disappeared, and nothing more was seen of them until next day, when it turned out that, seized with a fancy for visiting a settlement at which some of them had friends residing, they had appropriated the boat to their own use. The loss of their day’s wages (about 4s. per man), which was of course the result of their desertion, did not appear in the slightest degree to strike them as a penalty.

stronger than that of Sir Henry Light himself, in a despatch addressed to the Colonial office, in 1848.

"I consider it a great disadvantage to the progress of civilization, that the creoles, young and old, have hitherto been enabled to earn, by two or three days' labour of six or seven hours each, per week, more than sufficient maintenance; they are thus induced to irregular habits; they shoot, fish, and lead a wandering life. Planters cannot regulate the work on their estates as farmers do in Europe; they are subject to the caprice of the negro; continuous labour cannot be had; the crops fail, while the liabilities increase; and there are not a few of the nominal possessors of property who are ground to the earth by the debts accumulated annually from the enormous interest which the habits of West Indian dealings have introduced."

And farther on, he says with equal truth—

"The emancipated negro has been so flattered, and his vanity so excited, that he scarcely yet understands his position in society. In the efforts made to verify emancipation, humility has been forgotten. A marked change in the respectful demeanour of the population during the early years of emancipation, particularly in the younger of the creole race, is perceptible. I have even found it necessary, within the last twelve months, to keep a patrol of mounted police on the roads usually frequented for rides and drives of exercise by the inhabitants of Georgetown, to check the jeering and impertinent remarks of the loungers in the neighbourhood of the town, which have often been levelled at myself."

Exactly similar is the language of Lord Harris, in speaking of the labourers of the adjoining island of Trinidad,

"I have, moreover, great doubts whether the coolie and the African are morally or mentally capable of being acted upon by

the same motives in this island, on their first arrival, as labourers are in more civilized countries. That one which urges the mere support of animal existence will not induce them to continuous and skilful labour, when their wants can be supplied by the most parsimonious use of their muscles. The fear of the law, it is manifest, is not very readily brought to bear on them. Luxuries they do not generally know of or require. The only independence which they would desire is idleness, according to their different tastes in the enjoyment of it. And then the higher motives which actuate the European labourer (and we must remember the vast difference there is, even in Europe, with respect to the industry of various races), which are above and beyond circumstances, irrespective of mere self-interest, which he has received as his patrimony from previous generations, and which I believe, even in this age, are still to be found prevailing amongst them; viz. that to be industrious is a duty and a virtue; that to be independent in circumstances, whatever his station, raises a man in the moral scale amongst his race; and that his ability to perform his duties as a citizen, and then we may add as a Christian is increased by it."

The case stands briefly thus: the sudden transition from the artificial system of slavery has induced a social state quite as artificial, and ultimately perhaps not less dangerous. Society is turned upside down. The indolent, half savage negro, is courted, caressed, entreated to work for any wages, and in any manner that suits him. The planter is at his mercy. With house-servants and field labourers it is the same. Any who offer are welcome: minute inquiry into previous character is dispensed with, and indeed would not be tolerated for a moment by the applicant (if applicant he can be called, where the application is the other way): and happy indeed is the master whose household has not at some time or

other been deserted, and himself left dependent on his own resources for the performance of the commonest menial offices, by some momentary caprice on the part of those who, receiving his pay, are, in the common phrase of England, designated as his servants. To dismiss an offending domestic is useless : he finds a place at once, while the employer may look in vain for a substitute. It is nothing uncommon for a proprietor to commence cutting his canes, get his mill in readiness, make every thing ready for the grinding and boiling, and when half the work is done, and a large portion of his crop is lying on the ground, exposed to the tropical sun, and certain to rot within three or four days if not taken off, thereby not merely producing a waste of that which is actually exposed, but spoiling all with which it may subsequently be mixed, to find his labourers either pressing for an increase of wages, and refusing without it to do a stroke of work, or quite as frequently from mere indolence or whim throwing up their employments, and leaving him to gather in his harvest as best he may. Nor is this the worst. In some stages of the sugar-making process, especially that in which the mill is for the first time set going, the combined force of the whole gang generally employed on the estate is required. Instead of that whole force being present, one-half or two-thirds make their appearance at the appointed hour. In the absence of the rest nothing can be done ; but it by no means follows that those who may happen to

be on the spot should not ask for, and receive, their stipulated reward : and out of sixty men who ought to be in the field, the unfortunate manager has to pay for the forty who are there, at the rate of from 1s 6d to 2s per diem, their services in the meanwhile being absolutely lost to him. I do not mention these circumstances as in any manner making against the labourer, who owes nothing to the planter, and has an undoubted right to avail himself of any advantage which accident or British legislation (two terms now nearly synonymous) may have placed in his hands. But when reflecting on a state of society in which such things are of daily occurrence, it is difficult to believe that any sane man—even a philanthropist addressing a public meeting—should seriously have talked of a competition between free and slave labour.

But, it is urged, immigration from India or the African coast will, without the assistance of tariffs, furnish a sufficient remedy to this evil. Admitting that it would eventually do so, it must still be borne in mind that the mischief is urgent—the remedy only in prospect ; and considering the length of time which it must take to re-establish any thing like a fair proportion between the numbers of the employers and employed in the British West Indies, and the still farther period which must elapse before the ruined mills are built up again, and the abandoned estates restored to cultivation, it may perhaps be open to doubt, how far any measures of immigration, without some assistance in the shape of pro-

tection, will induce the British colonist to expend fresh capital (not easily obtainable on West Indian securities) in reviving a business which has hitherto proved so little profitable.

Again, for what length are apprenticeships to be sanctioned? Five years is the utmost demand of the colonist: more than this would be slavery; (Lord Grey on one occasion fixed a twelvemonth as the limit): and out of the profits made by the planter during this time, he has to defray the expenses incurred in bringing over the immigrant, and, should the latter desire it, to send him back at the expiration of his term of service. Moreover, his wages are regulated by the current rate of those paid in the colony: and this rate can never fall below a certain limit, though it may easily rise higher: for the quantity of unoccupied land is so great, and the price at which it may either be purchased or rented so moderate (to say nothing of the facilities which the backwoods afford for unauthorized "squatting"), that any attempt to reduce the exorbitant pay now given to a more reasonable standard of remuneration would only have the effect of turning every labourer throughout the country into a cultivator on his own account. Hence, though much may be done to obviate the inconvenience now caused by the want of a sufficient number of hands, it by no means follows that the ordinary result of greater cheapness will follow on the abundance of the supply. This is an important point, and one which seems hardly to have received

its full share of notice. Something, I am aware, may be done by introducing Coolies and Africans, who being new to the ways of the colony, and more easily guided than the Creole negroes, will accept a lower rate of pay during the first few months of their residence. This, however, is in its nature a mere temporary alleviation of the evil, and not a permanent remedy.

Again, though it may not be worth while for the individual planter to bring over from a distance of 15,000 miles, an immigrant whose services he can only secure for one or two years, the Colonial legislature may very fairly appropriate a sum for that purpose. But in this case, the executive Government becomes the sole distributors of the supplies so introduced; a vast patronage is created, of a nature peculiarly liable to abuse: and even if this patronage be fairly exercised, and not rendered subservient to political purposes, the appearance of favouritism—almost as great an evil as the reality—furnishes a standing and plausible topic of invective and complaint.

To put the matter in a different light. The slave and the free negro are equally supplied with the necessaries of life. The slave receives nothing more. The labourer out of his earnings buys land, builds a cottage, furnishes it handsomely (I have seen one of these negro houses, belonging to a common "field-hand" provided with all the comforts of an English farm-house), and nevertheless works at the most six or eight hours a day. Some-

body must pay for this. To counterbalance his gains—those extraordinary gains not being produced by corresponding industry on his part—there must be a loss somewhere. The planter will be at no pains to say on whom it falls. Against this heavy drawback what is there to set on the other side? There is more capital invested in Cuba than in any of our colonies. Skilled superintendence can always be obtained from the United States. The latest improvements in machinery are as well understood at the Havannah as at Birmingham. Two possibilities only have been suggested, as those by which the course of the Cuban planter may possibly be arrested. The first is that of a rising of the slaves, or of such a disposition to rise on their part, as may induce the Spanish Government to take effective measures for preventing the increase of their numbers. Now I do not believe that such a contingency can reasonably be calculated upon, as far as we have yet means of judging. Nothing can be stricter or more carefully enforced than the discipline of the estates. Communication between the negroes on different properties is all but impossible. Continual occupation leaves them neither time nor inclination to conspire. At night they are locked into barracoons; guarded during the day by armed overseers. The interest of every proprietor is the same: and a rising upon one estate would be put down by assistance from all its neighbours. Even granting the possibility of a rebellion, how far could

it spread? Thirty thousand men, well paid and officered, the flower of the Spanish army, and unquestionably the most efficient military force in the New World, are within a few days march. All the white inhabitants of the island would join them in suppressing a negro revolt. The country is generally level, and favourable for the operations of regular troops. What chance has the cowed, over-worked, broken-spirited slave against a vigilant police and a trained army? Appeal to the experience of the past: when has a slave insurrection threatened the peace of Cuba? Yet the Cuban system of slavery was never more humane than now: the defence of the island assuredly never more complete. It is useless to argue from the analogy of Jamaica in 1832; for in no single point does the resemblance hold. There it was well known to the negroes that emancipation had been repeatedly proposed in Parliament; many of them believed that it had been carried, and that the planters alone were illegally detaining them in slavery. Neither were the same precautions adopted; indeed, the idea of insurrection never appeared to have crossed the minds of the proprietors: they were unwarned, unarmed, defenceless. Equally idle is it to speculate on the possibility of American interference; the prompt and decided course taken by President Taylor sufficiently points out the general feeling of the country, which, with hardly an exception, supported him. When, in February last, I passed through the United States, I found all classes unanimous in

praise of his non-aggressive policy. In truth, the intended Cuban expedition was fitted out wholly at the expense of the Creole proprietors. What they aimed at, beyond the overthrow of a despotic government, it might perhaps be difficult for them to say ; but certainly, emancipation never entered into their views. All the wealth of Cuba is derived from slavery, and its continuance as an institution is, perhaps, the only point on which the Creole and the Spaniard, the governor and the governed, the planter and the merchant, all classes, ranks, and parties, are steadily and uniformly agreed.

But even allowing the possibility of an event which no man would call desirable, and few think probable, the renewal in Cuba of the scenes of St. Domingo, how is the British colonist benefited ? Brazil remains, with an unlimited, almost an unexplored territory, a soil varied and fertile, a tropical sun, navigable rivers to facilitate the sending off of produce, and, unhappily not least among the sources of her commercial prosperity, an extended seaboard in comparative proximity with the African coast. Is it expected that Brazil too will be revolutionized by the negro race ? If not, she retains a monopoly of the market, and all that is gained by blotting Cuba from the map, is that increase of prices to the British consumer, which such a monopoly tends to create, without a chance of the benefit being shared by the non-slaveholding producers. What a foundation on which to rest a

financial system! Two events are taken, each of them a great misfortune to civilization (but pass that by)—neither in any the most remote degree within our own control to create or avert, hasten or delay; against the occurrences of either of which separately the chances are as many to one, and therefore incalculably great as against the joint occurrence of both, and we are told that when, in the second, third, or fourth generation these long-predicted marvels shall have come to pass, the legislature of England will, for the first time, have ceased to inflict a wrong upon her own colonists; that is, if Jamaica and Guiana have not by that time relapsed into bush, or become negro republics under the protection of the British crown.

Far more plausible, and certainly less visionary, is the view taken by those who anticipate the extirpation of slavery by the extinction of the slave-trade: though even in admitting the feasibility of the means proposed, it would be easy to prove that they are not in themselves sufficient fully to accomplish the end. For let us allow for argument's sake that a complete and effective blockade can be at once and permanently established. We should, no doubt, hear nothing more of slaves being worked to death in ten years; as animals, their value would rise; a breeding system would be encouraged; more rest, better food, greater humanity, corresponding to their increased price in the market, would be the result of the change. But will any man contend that no more work would be obtained

from each individual, even under this modified system, than is done by the free negro, labouring only when and as it suits him? To assert this is to say that the latter works habitually up to the maximum of his strength; which assuredly will not be alleged by any one who has seen him in the field. The proposition is sufficiently clear. Either the British labourer must be worked as hard and paid as little as the Cuban slave; which, were it possible, would be undesirable, and as matters now stand never can happen: or the employer must pay a higher price for less work, as is actually the case; whence it follows that the slave-owner still maintains his superiority.

But more than this: inoperative for the benefit of the planter as the stoppage of the slave trade is thus proved to be, unless at the same time accompanied by a cessation of slavery in the countries to which it is carried on, even that slight gain is of no easy attainment. You have yourself declared in the House of Commons your belief that the African squadron had failed to effect its object; and voted for its abolition accordingly. Though venturing respectfully to differ from you in the conclusion to which you came, I agree with most of the premises on which that conclusion was founded: I believe with you that much money has been lavished, that many valuable lives have been thrown away, that great professions have been followed by little performance, and that a very general suspicion of the motives which influenced our seemingly inconsistent

policy has grown up in the minds of public men throughout the world. That unaided by a system of protective, I do not say of prohibitory tariffs, the squadron is little better than useless, I readily concede: nor can I conceive any more perplexing problem than that which might offer itself to a foreigner, who witnesses for the first time, the singular sight, of a government exerting all its energies to put down, by an armed force, the traffic which its commercial policy is directed to support. That they should view our proceedings with distrust is natural; as the evolutions of a madman, though rather dangerous to himself than to others, are still watched with no particular pleasure by those who may happen to be within his reach. But setting aside this consideration, and looking at the question only upon its own merits, I would ask whether in the present age, one pre-eminently of commercial enterprise and unrestricted intercourse among nations, it has ever been known that a Government succeeded in putting down an illegal trade of which the certain profits amounted to more than 300 per cent. on every successful voyage? Is it likely—is it reasonable to expect that England, standing alone, with only the lukewarm support of one or two powers, and against the strenuous opposition of the rest—by means in themselves the most inadequate, and those means involving a frightful sacrifice of the lives of her men, to say nothing of the waste of her treasure, should succeed in doing that which Napoleon in

all the fulness of his power, with half a million of armed men under his command, and Europe at his feet, attempted and failed to accomplish? By the proofs of experience—by the acknowledgment of all men—by the confession of its author himself—the Continental blockade was a failure. Lord Sydenham, who spoke from personal experience on the subject, has left on record his impressions of the result.

“Buonaparte, when, at the height of his power, he fulminated his decrees from the palace of the Duomo of Milan, which was to annihilate his only rival, thought but little that his orders could be contested, or his will disputed. And yet, what was the result? He, whose armies successively occupied every capital of Europe,—who made and unmade Kings with a breath,—was set at nought by the lowest of his subjects. The smuggler bearded him in the streets of his capital, and set his power at defiance in his own ports and cities. The goods, which he refused to admit, found their way through the Frozen Ocean into the heart of France. I speak from personal knowledge when I say, that an uninterrupted line of communication was established between Archangel and Paris; and goods, even the bulky articles of sugar, coffee, and manufactures, were conveyed with as much ease and safety, though at a proportionally increased cost, as from London to Havre. Insurances were then as currently effected at Brody and at Leipsic as at Lloyd’s or at New York.”*

Is the African trade less remunerative to those who carry it on than was that of the Continent forty years ago? Or is the African squadron a more efficient force than all the armies of Imperial France?

We have already had this topic so fully discussed

* Life of Lord Sydenham, p. 31.

that I need not dwell upon it at any length : yet the following evidence, given by Lord Howden before the Lords' Committee on the African Slave Trade, is so far worth quoting as it proves the actual result of recent legislation to correspond with that which might reasonably be expected.

" 249. Would it not be easy, if the Government were in earnest, to show that the Brazilian subjects were liable to the penalties which the Brazilian law enacts against the Slave Trade?—It would be a heavy blow, and a great discouragement ; but it is my opinion that you will always find people who will embark in the trade ; no risk has ever appeared to deter mankind from the prospect of enormous gains. This morning I drew out an estimate of the expenses of a slaver, and of the profits ; a good-sized slaver, with a good cargo, without being very full, and at a high valuation for purchase, wages, food, medicines, and price of slaves, costs about £5,000, and the return cargo of human beings sells for about £25,000, that is to say at 500 per cent profit.

" 246. Does anybody in Brazil believe that the Government is in earnest in putting down the Slave Trade?—Nobody in his senses, up to the present day.

" 247. Could any Government exist that attempted to put down the Slave Trade?—I should very much doubt it, unless some change, internal or external, occasioned a great revulsion of feeling in the country.

" 248. Supposing that the principal ports of Rio Janeiro and Bahia were blockaded in the strict sense of the word, by England, in consequence of a breach of the Treaties with us ; would not that strengthen the Brazilian Government wonderfully in that respect ? —It is very easy to talk of a blockade, (for I believe you are not speaking of a commercial blockade, but a blockade for the capture of slavers), but the difficulties attending it are serious. Firstly, the time of your cruisers would be almost entirely taken up with overhauling vessels who were not slavers, and who honestly came across them, and you would thus be constantly, vexatiously and

gratuitously, interfering with legitimate trade. Secondly, it would be almost impossible to get pilots to shew you the passages through which the slavers slip in, and land their cargoes. The configuration of the coast is very extraordinary; along a great part of the coast, almost parallel with it, there is a reef of rocks; the harbour of Pernambuco is made by this reef, which happens there to rise out of the water; this reef of rocks runs for a great many hundred miles with narrow openings in it; all these broken parts, and other passages, as well as the creeks and little harbours upon the coast, are known to the slave-dealers, who can take their little vessels in, whereas you cannot possibly follow; to say nothing of international law, and the assumed inviolability of a certain extent of sea, forming the territorial line of every maritime country. Thirdly, the slave-vessels are often not built for more than two or three voyages; they are just nailed together, of rough-hewn wood, and sometimes without knees; the result of which is, that they are almost all in a sinking condition when they arrive from Africa on the Brazilian coast. Fourthly, these vessels arrive on the coast, having consumed all their provisions, as the passage, from the trade wind, can be approximatively calculated, and you would have to victual them all, if you sent them elsewhere. If you possessed a geographical point in the neighbourhood, things would be different.

“249. Are not many of the vessels built in Africa?—I should think not. A great number of them are brought from America and bought for the trade; but the greater part of them are built under the eyes of the government, in the harbour of Rio Janeiro. While I was at Rio, a magnificent brig, called the “Galgo,” of 400 tons, with gilt trucks, and quarter galleries, left the harbour of Rio on a slave voyage; she had a regular permission from the authorities to go out at night, which is against the harbour regulations, in order to escape the vigilance of a man-of-war brig that I had desired to watch her. This brig was an exception to the great majority of slavers, which are very poorly found and slightly built; they arrive almost always from Africa, not only in a sinking, but also in a starving state, having little or no water, very often with hardly any provisions, and moreover generally with some

disease on board. If your blockade was meant to capture those vessels when they arrive on the Brazilian coast, what are you to do with them? they are neither sea-worthy nor are they victualled; they have, perhaps, an epidemic disease on board. Where are you to send them? You cannot expect the Brazilians to admit them into their ports, and if you were to send them up to Demerara, or to some Vice-Admiralty-Court, you have to go for many months in the year against a head-wind, and to make a second passage of probably three times the duration that has been occupied in making the passage across the Atlantic, and which has brought the miserable slaves into the state of wretchedness in which you find them. You must also reflect on a practical consideration, which is this; the smaller the cruisers on the coast of Brazil, the better they have always been found to answer; so that one prize crew for a large slaver captured, and sent on a second voyage, completely cripples the cruiser, as she must return to port if she has to provide another prize crew, and she may be six months before she ever sees any of her men again."

Can the inefficiency of the attempted blockade be more fully exposed? Now take the statement contained in a circular sent round to the members of the House of Commons last year by the Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, and which is compiled wholly from official documents. A fuller or more practical confirmation of Lord Howden's testimony could hardly be given.

"II. From the statistical table laid before the Select Committee on the Slave Trade, and embodied in the Report, delivered to the House of Commons last year, it appears that from 1829 to 1847, the number of slaves imported into Brazil was 699,100, and if there be added the imports of the year 1848, the total will be 750,000. But it is clear from the documents which accompanied the returns from Brazil during the period referred to, that the imports of slaves must have been considerably greater, as every artifice had been resorted to by the authorities, and by the

parties implicated in the inhuman traffic, to conceal, as far as possible, its extent. By the same table it appears, that the average mortality in the middle passage is estimated at 25 per cent, which will give the whole number shipped from Brazil during the last twenty years at one million. But even this number, appalling as it is, does not cover the extent of the Brazilian branch of the Slave Trade, for it has been demonstrated by the late Sir T. F. Buxton, that for every slave exported from Africa to the slave-markets of the New World, two perish in Africa in their original capture, in the march to the coast, in the barracoons, and by other means incidental to the Slave Trade. In relation to the increased horrors of the slave traffic, the Committee report, that, at the present time, 'the sufferings and mortality of slaves in the barracoons and in the middle passage are appalling to humanity, and the intensity of the sufferings, and the amount of the mortality, are unexampled in the history of the Slave Trade.'

" III.—It is clear from the evidence laid before the Select Committee on the Slave Trade, as well as from its report, that the Slave Trade has been greatly stimulated by the Sugar Act of 1846, which let into the British markets the slave-grown sugars of Brazil. The evidence laid before the Committee shews that the Slave Trade with Brazil had for several years been on the decline when the alteration in the fiscal policy of this country, gave it a new impetus. For instance, the import of slaves into Brazil in 1840, was 65,000, whereas during the six years ending with 1845, it scarcely exceeded on an average 23,000 per annum; in 1846, it rose to 52,600; in 1847, to 57,800; and it is believed a still larger number was imported in Brazil in 1848. In the resolutions of the Select Committee, they say, 'that the extent and activity of the Slave Trade have been mainly governed by the demand for the products of slave-labour in the markets of Europe;' and 'that the admission of slave-grown sugar to consumption in this country has tended, by greatly increasing the demand for that description of produce, so to stimulate the African Slave Trade, as to render an effectual check more difficult of attainment than at any former period.' The result is the

more to be deplored, inasmuch as it is clear, from documents, laid before Parliament, previous to 1846, that the best informed Brazilians entertained the opinion, that the Imperial Government 'must sooner or later not only concede to England all that she required towards the full and effectual suppression of the Slave Trade, but also bind herself down to the final abolition of slavery throughout the empire at a future period ; and that it would be much more politic to do so now, when she may hope for corresponding concessions from Great Britain, than to wait till driven by necessity into granting what she had refused to the dictates of humanity.'"—*Slave-Trade Papers*, 1845, *Class B.*, pp. 440-1.

Nothing is here said of the Cuban trade : which, however, I can testify to be rapidly on the increase. When I left the Havannah, a little more than three months ago, the fact that many slaves were being landed on various parts of the coast was one on which the planters attempted no disguise : indeed it was universally believed that the authorities connived at their introduction, which the very numerous forces at their command were certainly never required to repress. There is hardly an estate in the island on which a proportion of the negroes are not Africans, a fact with respect to which there can exist no dispute, as these are distinguishable at a glance from the Creoles : indeed so easily so that Mr. Turnbull proposed to give to the Mixed Commission Courts in Cuba a retrospective power of declaring any man free who could be recognized as an African, throwing upon the proprietors the onus of proving him to have been born in the country and therefore legitimately a slave.

"It is not easy to conceive any plausible objection that could

be urged by the Spanish or Brazilian government to this extension of the power of the court of mixed commission. There is happily no difficulty in distinguishing a Bozal negro from a Creole. The presumption of law is moreover in favour of freedom; and, in default of conclusive evidence to the contrary, amounts to what civilians call the *presumptio juris et de jure*. The onus of proving legitimate dominion must therefore be thrown on the party claiming it; and in this way the proposed protectors of the freedom of the African race at the *Havana* and *Rio de Janeiro* would scarcely ever be exposed to the risk of a nonsuit.

"It is not to be believed that the Spanish and Brazilian judges would systematically oppose the execution of the law, or refuse to exercise the new powers with which it is proposed to invest the courts in which they sit. Every African introduced into Cuba or Porto Rico since 1807, or into Brazil since 1826, is at this moment legally entitled to his freedom. It only remains to give the mixed courts already established a slight extension of their powers, and to provide a public vindicator of the rights of the slave and of the laws of the country in which he is held captive.

"The very first decision of the court I venture to say will operate like a charm. The whole machinery of the trade will be instantly disorganized; the newly-imported Bozal will no longer command a price in the market: the mark of contraband is stamped on his person, and cannot be effaced. A man is not imported like a barrel of flour for immediate consumption. Once landed, the smuggled flour cannot well be distinguished from that which has paid the custom-house duties. On the contraband Bozal, the marks of identity remain as long as he lives."*

I think then that I am fairly entitled to assume that among negroes, and in a tropical climate, free labour cannot compete with that which is enforced by the lash; that this would be still the case were it possible to check the supply whence the slaves

* Turnbull's Travels in Cuba, p. 394, 5.

killed off are replaced, while, as matters now stand, that supply cannot to any great extent be checked ; that even supposing the Slave Trade put down—which it will not be—the British planter would be driven from the market ; and that this state of things, so far from being temporary, appears likely to continue, to say the least of it, quite as long as the connection between England and her West Indian dependencies.

One or two points remain to be touched upon before I quit this part of the subject. It is a favourite topic of reproach against the planters, that they have confined themselves exclusively to the cultivation of sugar, neglecting other crops, which, it is alleged, would in the present state of the market bring a higher profit. Cotton, tobacco, and Indian corn are among the chief articles of export for which it is supposed that the cultivator could find a purchaser at a remunerating rate. Now, in the first place, considering that £5000, £10,000, or even a larger sum, has been frequently expended in preparing an estate for the growth of the cane, and manufacture of sugar, and that of this the mill, engine, coppers, and other fixtures which for any other purpose are absolutely useless, absorb no inconsiderable portion, it seems as hard to call on the landowner to sacrifice at once all the capital hitherto invested by his predecessors or himself, in order to adopt a new, even though ultimately a more profitable system, as it would be to say to an English farmer who should have tile-drained, fenced, and manured his land according to the most ap-

proved fashion for the purpose of growing corn, that to be sure it was useless sending wheat to market while the present prices lasted—but that his fields would make an excellent grazing farm. But besides this, it seems to be forgotten that the same competition which prevents the planter from exporting sugar at a paying price will equally interfere with his sale of any other article of tropical produce. There is in Jamaica, as far as I know, no fruit or tree which does not grow in Cuba as well. Soil, climate, seasons, are alike in both islands; and in like manner I am told that all the natural productions of Guiana may be raised in Brazil with equal success. The dilemma is obvious. Either the cultivation of these above-named articles for export will pay, or it will not. If not, the planter gains nothing by being able to raise them. If they can be sold at a profit, it becomes worth the while of the slave-owner to raise them too, and thereby undersell him. It is true that cultivated and reclaimed ground is somewhat dearer in Cuba; but as yet, not one-fourth of the whole of that island is cleared; and for land still in bush a very moderate price is charged.

It is idle then to reproach the planter of Jamaica with not having developed the resources of his own country. To open a new trade is at all times hazardous. It is the very last idea which would naturally suggest itself to men already broken in spirit and bankrupt in fortune: and to open a new trade with the certainty that if it should prove a successful one, a rival with whom they cannot com-

pete will at once step in and carry off the profits, while the loss in case of failure must fall wholly on them, is a speculation which even in these speculating days, no sane man is likely to embark upon. Again, we are told a great deal of the marvels to be worked at some future period by the negro proprietors or tenants, labouring on their own farms. I have heard it seriously contended, though of course only by men having no practical knowledge of West Indian habits, that this class, having few, if any expenses, and little or nothing to pay in the shape of rent, being moreover capable of enduring all the year through a degree of fatigue which would kill an European in a week, ought to undersell both slave-owners and white employers of free labour. Now on this head I have only a few words to say in answer. First, the business of a sugar-estate is two-fold; it is an union of agriculture and manufacture. For the latter, at least, skill and combination are required; of which the negro possesses neither. Nor can this part of the process be carried on separately from the other: for the canes, if not taken at once to the mill, are spoilt. On this single ground, the difficulty of carrying on cane-cultivation except on large estates is almost insuperable: small farming is out of the question. In the next place, appeal to experience—how much sugar has ever been grown for export by the negro farmers? I will undertake to say, not five tons in any single year, taking the range of all the British islands. And, lastly, the extracts which I have already quoted from official reports

and despatches, shew sufficiently the estimation in which this class is held by those best acquainted with his character; and consequently the extreme improbability of their succeeding as cultivators of the soil. I contend then, that the British planter cannot compete in an English market with the slave-owner: that this inability extends equally to the production of all articles of export; and that where the white proprietor has failed, the negro will not succeed, more especially if, deprived of the instruction and example of Europeans, by their gradual abandonment of the island, he is left to retrograde, as there is but little doubt that he will do, into his pristine condition of African barbarism.

The exact amount of differential duty required to redress the disparity so existing is unquestionably a matter of far more uncertainty and doubt. I shall not attempt to fix the precise limits over which such a duty might be made to range: but merely remark on the absurdity of representing the planter as interested in bringing about that state of the market, which alarmists call a sugar famine; or even as desiring to see a permanently high price established. There is not a manager or overseer in any one of the islands who could not speak from his own knowledge of the injurious effects of a sudden and extraordinary rise in prices. For with the fact of such a rise having taken place, the labourer is just as well acquainted as the employer. His demands rise in proportion: unreasonable at all times, he now becomes doubly so; and not only are the profits of the planter

transferred to his pocket in the shape of extravagant wages, but the certainty of being hired by somebody whenever he wishes it, and hired on his own terms, makes it absolutely impossible to ensure his continuing to work on an estate a moment after the fancy may seize him to go away. I say then, distinctly, that, next to a price, which, as at present, does not cover the cost of production, there is nothing less desired by the Jamaica proprietors, than one, which being exorbitantly high, is also in its very nature fluctuating. Such a state of the merchants leads to speculation, demoralizes the labourers, enriches few except those who at the moment may chance to have a stock on hand, and ceasing, in all likelihood, as quickly as it began, ruins many who had rashly placed confidence in its continuance. An abundant supply of labour, which the Imperial Government appear bent on precluding him from ever obtaining, and such commercial advantages over the employer of slaves as shall equal the difference between the no-wages paid by the one, and the high wages paid by the other, form the sum of the Colonial demands. Any thing less than this is direct protection given to the foreigner: while more is not asked, and indeed is not desired, by those whose claim I am endeavouring to support.

Hardly worthy of notice, yet often dwelt upon, is the objection, that to restrict or limit the supply of foreign sugar, is to establish a Colonial monopoly. For nothing is said, either in the petitions of the various West Indian Legislatures, or of individuals

connected with those countries, touching the exclusion, or even the imposition of a differential duty upon sugar, the produce of foreign states, employing only free-labour. And even granting that the British Colonies alone supplied our markets, in what sense is this a monopoly? Will there be no competition between the East and West Indies? None between Bombay, Madras, Ceylon, and the Mauritius? Will the interests of Jamaica, Guiana, Barbadoes, Antigua, Trinidad, not clash with one another? In soil, in climate, in population, in means of transport, each one of these countries differs from the rest. The monopoly is all on the other side. A dozen tropical colonies, all employing freemen, and freemen only, may fairly enough compete with one another in the cultivation of the cane, as with an open market they assuredly will do: but once let in slavery upon them, and all alike are thrown out. The differential duty contended for, is not meant to restrain, but to create competition. You cannot fail to remember how strenuously it was urged, by the Manchester manufacturers throughout the debates which took place on the Ten Hours Bill, that to impose upon them any restrictions as to time, was unjust, because their rivals in other parts of the world, not being so burdened, would be able to drive them from the market. Though liable to be annulled by other considerations, the argument, as far as it went, was a fair one: and considering the pertinacity with which it was pressed on the public, by its authors, it seems strange that they

should be found among the most eager opponents of the far stronger, though precisely similar claim now put forward by the planters.

In truth, I am at a loss to understand on what conceivable ground, whether of public morality or policy, the Legislature would be entitled to oppose a demand on the part of the Colonists for the restoration of slavery. Our national protest against its existence is at an end. "*Qui facit per alium, facit per se*," says the legal maxim; although Parliament in its omnipotence affirms the reverse. We are much too scrupulous to steal, but we can see no objection to becoming purchasers of stolen goods. We cannot think of working women eighteen hours out of twenty-four in our own Colonies, but we are quite willing to pay the Cuban planters to do it for us. It really appears strange that the sense of the ridiculous, for which Englishmen are supposed to be distinguished above all other people, should not have revolted long ago at arguments so shallow, and professions so insincere; at morality, to which Monsieur Tartuffe furnishes the only parallel, supported by logic which a schoolboy would be at no pains to refute.

But I go yet farther; and I say that to restore slavery, such as it existed in the British Colonies during the last seven or eight years of its continuance, would not only be a more profitable policy than that which we are now pursuing, but also one more humane. Take such a description of a Jamaica estate as is given in Mr. Lewis's lately published and very amusing journal. Compare the

picture of negro life there displayed with the not less accurate statements of Mr. Turnbull and other travellers in Cuba. Can a comparison be instituted between the two? On the one side, tasks enforced to the utmost, and often beyond the utmost, which human strength will bear: overseers armed to the teeth, carrying their whips with them into the field (and these not merely for show): blood-hounds kept in readiness to hunt down runaways; and when the short interval of rest allowed to the negro comes round, a promiscuous crowd, sometimes of all ages and both sexes, driven into a close prison, there to sleep as they can on the bare ground until again roused for the next day's work. For cruelty on the part of masters or managers there is virtually no punishment: it being held that the loss of a valuable negro is a sufficient fine on his owner for having taken his life. I do not say that this is the law, but that the practice is such as I state it, there can be no doubt. When was any thing like this ever known in a British colony? Slavery, as it existed latterly in Jamaica, was a mitigated serfdom: indeed the fallacy of free labour being more profitable than that of the slave arose chiefly from the fact that under the lenient and humane system adopted by individuals, and to some extent enforced by the local laws, the planter found himself unable to compel even a reasonable proportion of work. What is there to prevent him from holding to us such language as this?—"You refuse to pay the price for free-grown sugar—you insist on having sugar cheap—you know that you can only get it

cheap by employing slaves to make it—you therefore sanction slavery, and cannot pretend to see in it anything to be objected to—why not let us hold slaves? Why not do so for humanity's sake? We are your subjects—upon us you may enforce laws by which their good treatment shall be secured—over the Cuban planter you have no such power. If you will encourage the evil which you ruined us in order to put down, at least do it under restrictions easy to be enforced, and in the most mitigated form of which it is susceptible. We shall not revive the slave-trade. We shall not work our negroes to death. All that you have gained by our destruction is the substitution of the severest and most inhuman shape of servitude which the world has witnessed since the days of ancient Rome, for one which you had done much to amend, which was limited and circumscribed both by law and public feeling, from which you had removed its most objectionable features, and which even when so softened down, you thought too bad to tolerate.” I do not know how such an appeal could be answered. The vicarious morality which will not suffer slavery to pollute its soil, but by transferring to Cuba a part of the profit, thinks to get rid of the guilt; and which, because it employs a foreigner instead of an Englishman to do its dirty work, conceives itself no longer responsible for that work being done at all, requires for its full appreciation a refinement of understanding which I must acknowledge to be wanting in me. One parallel, and one only, suggests itself; I doubt not that the act of 1846 would

have found favour in the eyes of those righteous rulers of whom, eighteen hundred years ago it was said, "that they laid heavy burdens upon others, and would not so much as touch them with one of their fingers."

A great deal has been urged. and not without some justice, respecting the inconsistency of admitting the coffee of Cuba, and the cotton and tobacco of the United States, while professing to exclude slave grown produce: and you will not, therefore, think that I am unnecessarily going out of my way to raise or answer objections, if I devote a page or two to the consideration of this topic. Several points of difference exist between the cases thus tortured into a parallel. In the first place, there is a wide and obvious distinction between the absolute exclusion of all articles, in the production or preparation of which, in any stage, the labour of slaves is employed; and the simple resolution to admit nothing so produced, if obtainable otherwise. An absolute declaration of a refusal to trade with all slave-holding countries is in the present state of the world impossible; nor would it even succeed in effecting the only object for which it could be justifiably undertaken, that of putting an end to slavery: for without traffic there can be little or no intercourse; and in such intercourse lies the best hope of inculcating on other nations humanity and justice. Accordingly, I am not aware that any English statesman has ever proposed wholly to shut out from English markets those slave-grown, or slave-manufactured articles of commerce, which

as the result of free labour are not to be obtained ; the attempt to do this would lead us too far, and involve us in the consideration of too many questions, with which, as a nation, we can hardly be expected to deal : as for instance, what is slavery ? Is the Russian a slave ? the Chinese ? the inhabitant of Java ? and again, how far are we justified in interfering with the domestic institutions of other countries ? The moment we step beyond the plain rule, to buy no slave-grown goods when the same can be produced through the agency of free labour, we find ourselves entangled in a succession of mazes, from which no visible outlet appears. Philanthropists may call this, as some have called it, a compromise by which right is sacrificed to expediency. Be it so : admit that in discouraging slavery we have shewn ourselves less earnest than we might have done ; how does this justify a second departure from duty ? The principle is not much better than that which is implied in the vulgar saying, “ as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb.” The practice recommended is that of the relapsed teetotaller, who having once broken his pledge, and with it lost all self-restraint, thinks it in future the same thing whether he keeps himself drunk or sober. Because there is a certain amount of evil in the world—so runs this admirable argument—which through accident, or men’s weakness, or long prescription in its favour, or the imperfection which attends on all human legislation, it is not in our power wholly and at once to eradicate ; therefore, what we can check, what we

can diminish, what ultimately it may be possible to root out altogether, we are not only permitted, but bound in consistency to encourage and foster by positive legislation! We all know how this same objection, a little modified, starts up whenever any reform, no matter of what kind, is proposed. There seem to be people in the world who imagine that to exert themselves in behalf of one class, while any other remains not better circumstanced, so far from being a commendable act, is a positive injustice to those whose turn for assistance has not yet arrived. When Sir Samuel Romilly introduced his reforms of the Criminal Code, and began by striking off one or two only from the list of capital felonies, he was at once assailed by the cry, "What is the use of doing so much if you do no more?" When Lord Ashley carried through his plan for the relief of women and children engaged in factory labour, he was reminded of the numbers employed in other trades, for whom no similar provision could be made. And just in the same way we are now told that so long as slaves are worked to death in digging copper, or on raising cotton for the English market, it is useless to do anything which may lessen the production of sugar in Cuba. This is a very common mode of reasoning; but one to which I cannot bring myself to accede. I rejoice that the severity of our laws should on the whole have been mitigated, even though some offences may even now be too severely visited. I believe that to rescue from overwork, with all its accompaniments of ignorance and consequent de-

gradation, many hundred thousands of factory labourers, was a just and a noble act, even though many are still left in England who suffer under these evils; and in like manner, my desire to see the labour of more than a million of slaves employed on sugar estates, replaced by that of freemen, is not diminished, but rather stimulated and increased by the knowledge that when this great reform shall have been accomplished, much will still remain to do. To leave half-a-dozen wrongs unrepaired, merely from a difficulty in deciding on which you ought first to begin, is a proposition to me almost as inconceivable as would be a determination to pass through life without learning anything, because omniscience is not to be attained by man.

To return to the details of the alleged parallel between the cotton and the sugar trade, will any one say that it is the same thing, whether I merely hesitate as to the immediate propriety of removing a long-standing evil, or deliberately, and with my eyes open, set about originating a new one? Yet to establish an analogy between the two cases, this must be asserted. Again, the work of a cotton plantation is very different from, and infinitely lighter than, that of a sugar growing estate. On this point I speak with some confidence. Nor is this all. Who believes that slavery will be permanent in the United States? And on the other hand, who believes that it will ever cease in Cuba? In the one case, interference in any shape from a foreign government, and especially from that of England, would probably retard the progress of a

reform, which as matters now stand, the present generation seems likely to witness—the entire abolition of slavery. In the other, England has interfered directly—but it has been to perpetuate a system which steadily and consistently discouraged by her, might, nay must, in time, of itself have died away.

And if any further argument on the question be required, it is enough to say that the Colonies cannot produce such a quantity of cotton as is required for the markets of this country. Their supply of labour is limited; and whatever capital is expended, or hands are employed, in the production of a new article of export, must be considered as so much taken away from what has hitherto been their staple cultivation. Do what we will, give what protection we may, the British West Indies cannot for many years be supposed capable of supplying England with both cotton and sugar. To assign to the Colonists both these tasks, would be to ensure the non-performance of either. It is then surely the wiser and the more prudent course, relinquishing an unattainable object, and not throwing discredit upon our principles by announcing that they require of us impossibilities, to confine ourselves, at least for the present, to the pursuit of an end where success is within our reach, and where indeed under a policy less “injurious and vacillating,” than that of British governments since 1834, it might already have been attained. I have so far dealt with the charge of inconsistency, in our occasional admission of slave-grown produce,

because it really appears to me not justified by the circumstances of the case. But it is not one upon which I should be inclined to lay much stress. As a taunt—as a sarcasm—as an *argumentum ad hominem*, such as never fails to raise a cheer in debate, it may be very well to say, “You have no right to talk about principles, since on a former occasion you failed to act up to yours.” But this, whatever it may prove against the professor of public morality, does not in any manner impugn the cause which he upholds; nay, rather the reverse; for the higher the standard which he proposes to himself, the greater becomes the probability of his deviating from it in some particular; and surely no man acquainted with the world will contend that because in one or two instances an individual may have departed from his duty, and fallen below the level of his former and general conduct, that therefore he is to be treated as a hypocrite throughout, and the principles which he upholds are to be condemned without farther inquiry. If we have done wrong before, we shall assuredly not make the matter better by repeating the offence. If to exclude slave grown coffee and cotton from our markets be a duty—the danger of the attempt being great and the chance of success but small—a *fortiori* we are pledged to the exclusion of slavegrown sugar, which we know to be possible, and had in fact to a great degree already effected before the sudden reversal of our policy put an end to the experiment.

IV. I shall now advert briefly to a point all impor-

tant in the consideration of this question, but one which happily is so evident as to require no very lengthened proof—I mean the marked distinction which must be drawn between the claim of the West Indian planter as a non-slave-holder, to be protected against the superior advantages of his rival, and the demand put forward by him as by the agriculturist at home, on the wider and more general ground of his privileges as a British subject. Into the latter question I shall not even indirectly enter. Whatever may be my opinion as to the merits of a system of free imports, I shall deal with that system as though it were permanently established. I am content to assume as proved the general principle of Free-trade : I plead only for a single and particular exception : the grounds on which I do so, namely, the superior facilities afforded by slave-labour, and the necessity of counterbalancing that advantage by a corresponding inequality of duties, I have already endeavoured to explain : and I now wish to remind you that I do not stand alone in drawing this distinction : that among the most eminent supporters of Sir R. Peel's financial policy, I find many who protest against its extension to the case of the West Indies : and that I am thereby justified in contending that the former scale of duties on sugar might fairly be reimposed, without in any matter exposing those who should vote for such a charge to even a suspicion of desiring to retract their expressed opinions on the very different subject of agricultural protection.

I begin with the House of Lords. In that House

no man, through a long series of years, more constantly availed himself of every opportunity (and the opportunities were many) to oppose a restrictive policy in commercial matters, than did Lord Brougham. Yet hear the language of Lord Brougham on the first reading of the Sugar-duties Act of 1846.

"It was as a question of the Slave Trade, and not of slavery, that he now regarded this question. He little thought, after having throughout his whole life laboured in the good cause—after seeing all the efforts that had been made by this country to put an end to the traffic—in 1806, in 1807, and in 1811, and again in that crowning effort, when this country paid so enormous an amount of money in the hope of effectually contributing to the abolition of the trade, by abolishing slavery in the West India Colonies—he little thought, after all those triumphs of the good cause, that now, in the year 1846, he would have been compelled to rise in his place in that House in order once more to denounce the African Slave Trade, and to complain that a liberal Government, the Government of a party deriving all their lustre from the name of Fox, should have been publicly guilty of the introduction of a measure such as this—a measure the introduction of which must be regarded as worse than the refusal for so many years to abolish slavery—worse than the refusal to emancipate the negroes, because it was the first instance, in the history of this question, and in our legislation upon it, of the attempt by a positive enactment, actively, effectually, and vigorously, to encourage the African Slave Trade. Viewing it in that light he should record his vote against it."*

Again, during the same session, Lord Brougham, in presenting a petition against the bill, took an opportunity to record his opinion against it: a circumstance which I name chiefly on this account, that the petitioner was Thomas Clarkson, who,

* Hansard's Debates, vol. lxxxviii. p. 536.

equally professing attachment to the principles of free trade, nevertheless protested against their application where the effect must be to extend the area of slavery. Not less strenuous was the opposition of the Bishop of Oxford on the second reading.

“ We are for the first time called on to commit an act of retrogression, and to declare that the idea then written on the minds of the English people—the principle which, in spite of all the difficulties and hindrances it met with at a time when every free opinion wore the semblance of Jacobinism, and was thought to threaten the institutions of the land, enthroned itself in the hearts of the English nation—must be abandoned ; that we must take a step in the opposite direction ; that we must reopen what our predecessors closed ; renew what, upon conviction, they abolished, believing that this great political crime can be, in this world of God, nothing but a political error. We are called on to declare that we may improve our revenues, amend our finances, and increase and make abundant the supplies a people need, by doing a wrong, encouraging injustice, and giving occasion to the perpetration of the cruellest wickedness and the darkest evils that this earth ever groaned under.”*

This again is the opinion of a supporter of the new financial system. And in the Commons a similar tone was taken by more than one speaker from whose thoughts assuredly nothing was farther than a return to the protective policy. Indeed, through the whole debate it was hardly once asserted that the condition of the West Indian planter could fairly be paralleled with that of the agriculturist at home. It is idle to multiply proofs when no doubt can exist : but the point, though obvious, was too important to be passed over without notice. And long as is this letter already, I can-

* Hansard's Debates, vol. lxxxviii. p. 667.

not close it without one additional remark concerning the debate to which I have already referred, in answer to the two charges most frequently alleged against those who protest against the decision to which the House then came being considered as final. By one class of politicians, it is said that we are lowering the dignity of the Legislature in asking of that body to rescind a vote passed only four years ago. It might be urged in reply, that if injustice has been done, the most dignified as well as the most expedient course is to repair it as soon as may be ; but giving to the objection all the weight to which it is entitled, and more than that to which it is entitled, when we consider that in that same year of 1846 there were rescinded not one, but half a dozen consecutive and consistent votes of the House of Commons on the very question with which we are dealing ; I say that there is evidence in Hansard fully sufficient to establish the point for which I contend, namely that the decision upon the sugar-question was pronounced under the pressure of an important but temporary crisis—that that crisis has now passed over—and that therefore, whether it were wise or no to sacrifice to its urgency a great national interest, yet that the reason for the sacrifice having ceased to exist, there is no longer a plea for continuing longer to pursue the course, which even then, upon its own abstract merits, was unequivocally condemned by those who on other grounds, thought fit to adopt it. I refer to the speech of Sir Robert Peel, in all respects one well worthy of notice, delivered

on the motion of Lord George Bentinck, July 27, 1846.

“ I and those with whom I acted, always felt this question of slave labour, and the produce of slave labour, to be an exception from the principles which ought to govern our ordinary commercial policy. I thought we stood in a peculiar relation to our West India Colonies. The case of the East Indies differs materially in respect to the supply of labour from the West India Colonies. In the case of those Colonies you had emancipated from slavery the negroes on whose labour, in former years, the Colonists had mainly relied for the supply of this country with West India produce. You had given to the holders of slaves a liberal, and, estimating it as to the pecuniary amount, apparently a munificent compensation for the sacrifice of their property ; but however large that sum may have been, whether it was an adequate compensation for the eventual loss they sustained, is a matter open to considerable doubt. Be that, however, as it may, you did subject the West India Colonies to great disadvantages in competing with those countries where slavery is still maintained. That peculiar relation in which you thus stood to the West Indies, appeared to us to justify a departure from ordinary rules, and to require in justice to those Colonies that at least a considerable interval should be allowed to elapse before they were required to enter into competition with countries placed under very different circumstances. Such also was the opinion entertained by one of the most strenuous and able advocates for the general application of the principles of Free Trade—I allude to Mr. Deacon Hume—who, as my Hon. Friend who spoke last justly observed, always professed to consider the condition of the West Indies as forming an exception to the general rule. On that account, considering the difficulties under which they laboured, considering the great advantage to this country of promoting the welfare of that great supply of the empire, considering the great importance of retaining the affections of that portion of our Colonial empire, I deemed it to be perfectly justifiable to permit a considerable interval to elapse, in order to enable the West Indian proprietors to prepare to

meet that formidable competition to which they must be exposed in the supply of slaves and other articles, the produce of slave labour.”*

This is a long quotation : but I give it because it seems impossible to sum up in fewer, or more lucid words, the argument which the speaker subsequently proceeds, not to answer, but to overrule. Why, after this, did Sir Robert Peel vote for the motion of the Government? Hear his explanation :—

“I do not deny that, having apprehensions which many do not entertain with respect to the possible effect of the measure proposed by Her Majesty’s Ministers, fearing it may at first at least give a stimulus to the Slave Trade, it is not without great reluctance that I have come to the conclusion to give my support to the proposal of the Noble Lord.

“I do so on this ground : I am forced to consider other than the mere abstract merits of the question. I am forced to consider the position of political parties, and the prospects of forming another Government, in the event of the overthrow of the present. I agree with the Noble Lord, the Member for Lynn, that there ought to be no sham and delusive opposition to the measure of the Government. If there be opposition, it ought to be an opposition disregarding the possible consequence of it, namely, that it might be fatal to the Government. I believe it might be possible by a combination of parties to displace the Noble Lord ; at least I believe it might be possible by such a combination to prevent the present success of the measure the Noble Lord has proposed. I think it would be possible, by the union of different parties, by appeals to the feelings and passions of the people of this country, to raise a decisive but a temporary impediment to the success of the Noble Lord’s measure ; but I feel bound to ask myself the question, ‘Is it consistent with my duty to sanction and be a party to that combination?’ I think not.”†

* Hansard’s Debates, vol. lxxxviii. p. 93, 94. † Ibid. p. 95.

And again, after recommending measures for the relief of the planters, which have not been even proposed, and specially approving of immigration, which Lord Grey has all but made impossible :—

“I return, however, to the question—Am I justified in entering into a combination for the purpose of displacing the Noble Lord from the Government within six weeks from the period at which he acceded to it? Gentlemen seem to think that they may safely enter into that combination, for that the Noble Lord will retain office notwithstanding defeat on this measure. I know not how the Noble Lord would act; but I think the Noble Lord, under the circumstances in which he accepted power, being defeated in so important a measure as the present, would be fully justified in resigning office.”*

This then is evidently and avowedly the ground on which the defence is rested. Not a word is said in favour of the measure so supported; on the contrary, Sir Robert Peel declares it fraught with danger. But the interests of the West Indies, of the merchants at home, of the African race throughout the world, sink into insignificance as compared with the necessity of keeping the then and now existing Ministry in office! The compliment is a high one: how far it has been earned, I will not stop to inquire; nor do I in any manner complain of the rule of conduct here laid down. It may be wise, it may be statesmanlike, it may even be necessary, to postpone local to imperial interests; nay, of two interests affecting the empire, to postpone the lesser to the greater. The advanced age, the high abilities and the long experience in office

* Hansard's Debates, vol. lxxviii. p. 98.

of Sir Robert Peel entitle his opinions to a respect which from me they will always receive : and I do not attack the constitutional position here assumed, although it does appear difficult to say why the mere fact of a Ministry having pledged themselves to a certain line of policy and threatening if thwarted in it to resign, should be held to deprive the House of Commons of its constitutional right, or rather to absolve us from our constitutional duty, of criticising, and if need be controlling, the actions of the executive. Carry out the principle to its full extent, and the Government of the day becomes invested with absolute power : on every detail of every measure they may come forward with the same threat of resigning if defeated ; they may identify their ministerial existence with each separate item of their policy, and according to the theory here stated, an attempt to oppose their will in any particular is equivalent to a vote of want of confidence. What is this but to preclude the discussion of all public affairs ? to merge all questions in one, and to assume that there is no medium between admitting the infallibility of a Government and voting for their dismissal from office ? But passing by the doubt here raised, it is enough to say that the crisis under the pressure of which the House of Commons gave its vote in 1846, can hardly be held to exist at the present day. Shall we still be told that to vote for an import duty on slave-grown sugar is to incur the responsibility of causing a change of ministry ? Or

does not the responsibility lie rather on the other side?—with those who take office pledged to support a principle to which a majority in the legislature have declared themselves hostile, and then, by threatening to throw the country into confusion, endeavour to make the will of the minority absolute over the whole? I say the will of the minority, for the extracts which I have quoted above sufficiently prove the judgment of Sir Robert Peel and that of those who acted with him to have been adverse to the present act: nor can it be doubted that looking at the then state of parties, the vote so opportunely given in aid of the Government, alone saved them from defeat. Upon the merits of the law there was four years ago, and I see no reason to doubt but that the same will be the case now, a clear preponderance of hostile opinion; and are the representatives of the people deliberately to be told from the Treasury bench, that to the convenience of a Ministry unable if opposed to persevere, and unwilling to retract, their conscientious opinions on such a question as this are to be surrendered? Surely this is, to say the least of it, a new principle of legislation.

But again, we are told that the experiment has not lasted long enough—that it is yet incomplete—that the evils of which the planters complain are the inevitable accompaniments of a state of transition—and that we must wait a little longer before we pronounce any opinion as to the ultimate effects of the law as it stands. Now to this it is an obvious

reply, that when an experiment is being tried, the failure of which involves the ruin of one of the great interests of the Empire, we ought at least to provide the means of drawing back in time, if the result appear likely to be other than prosperous ; more especially if the very projectors of the scheme tell us from the first that they entertain serious doubts of its success. But more—when is it to be complete? How much capital must be wasted—how many estates must be thrown up—how many families are to be reduced to beggary—before the consistency of Parliament is declared sufficiently vindicated? Yet further : if two, three, or five years hence we again bring before Parliament the question which we are told it is now premature to discuss, what security have we that the lapse of time will not be held to have barred our claim? Plausible as it may sound to tell us now that we apply too soon, I can imagine arguments just as plausible being employed hereafter to prove that we come too late. To-day we are warned not to meddle with an incomplete experiment—then, we shall be reminded of the danger of reversing a policy which has so long remained unaltered. Nay, the very distress of which we now complain will be turned into an argument against us. “That distress,” we shall hear, “arose from a change in the financial system. Surely you are not going again to encounter the evils which arise from an alteration of tariffs? again to unsettle the markets? again to shake the confidence of the commercial world in the permanence of English mercantile laws?”

There is not an argument in favour of the act of 1846, applicable now, which will not hereafter be brought up with tenfold force. But this is not all. Compare the West Indies five years ago with the West Indies as they are now. Never was a downward progress more rapid: and what is there to stay that descent at its present point? To delay redress is to deny it: to defer the application of a legislative remedy is to withhold the payment of a debt until the original creditor is ruined, and his claim has passed into other hands. Properties, as I have shewn, are daily changing hands. Cultivated colonies, one after another, are relapsing into wilderness. Families which formerly enjoyed all the comforts, not to say the luxuries of life, are left, in a climate which makes bodily labour impossible for an European, literally without the means of support. And of what avail is it to say to the sufferers, that when ministerial or party arrangements permit—when this minister is no longer afraid of being taunted with inconsistency because experience has led him to change his views, or that public man has ceased to apprehend any danger from a revival of the Corn-law agitation, or when the Cabinet shall have sufficient parliamentary and official evidence before them, (I do not say to convince them of the results of their measures—they have that already—but) to make it evident to all men that they lie under a necessity of retracing their steps—then, and not till then, it may be thought worth while to do something for those whose ruin is as directly the

work of British legislation, as if their estates had been confiscated to the Crown? There is a story recorded in Lord Eldon's life, which seems to me singularly applicable to the present crisis. Two parties went to law, concerning the disputed possession of a cargo of fruit. The case was laid before the Chancellor, who, as his manner was, doubted, hesitated, raised objections, heard them answered, tried the cause twice over, and finally postponed his judgment for an indefinite period. Counsel, it may be presumed, did not complain of the delay; nor perhaps did the attornies; but the parties did: and after much expenditure of money and time, it was agreed on both sides that the suit should be withdrawn, for the excellent reason, that pending its decision, the property litigated for had long since been declared worthless, and was in fact thrown into the sea. You will best be able to judge how far the parallel holds. I shall indulge in no political predictions. I have not to be told of the responsibility of action upon such a question as the present; but I know also, that when time presses, when matters grow hourly worse, when the whole fabric of the state is in danger, there attaches a not less weight of responsibility to a refusal to act. Of the future destiny of the West Indian Colonies, obvious as from present indications it seems, I shall say nothing. But of the past and the present I can speak; and in the ruin of once flourishing districts, in a decreasing cultivation, in a people relapsing into habits of

barbarism, in the alienation of men, once among the most loyal subjects of the crown,—aye, and in the guarded language of the officials themselves, who vainly try to soften down and explain away the distress whose existence they cannot deny, I read a protest against that course of conduct, so dear to political timidity, which repents without retracting, admits the wrong which it refuses to redress, sets up the claim of a three or four years prescription against those of justice and right, and upon a confessedly unsuccessful experiment in legislation against which one half of the empire is even now crying out, pronounces no harsher judgment than this, “*Fieri non debuit, factum valet.*”

I here close this letter : if I shall be thought to have expressed myself too warmly concerning the policy against which I am endeavouring to plead, I shall regret the circumstance : but I write with the recollection fresh upon my mind of the miserie which I have witnessed, and with as strong a conviction of the cause to which they are distinctly traceable : and I cannot regret having taken, what seemed to me the most effectual means of protesting against a policy which is now again to be put upon its trial : finally to be approved, or finally rejected : and in the approbation or rejection of which, I believe to be involved, not merely the prosperity of nineteen Colonies, not alone the welfare of the African race throughout the world, not the mere increase of a failing revenue, and the rescue from ruin of a great commercial interest : but the station

and character of England among the nations of the world,—the consistency of the Imperial Legislature—and the honour of the British crown.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours, with sincere respect,

E. H. STANLEY.

APPENDIX A.

(See page 15.)

LIST OF CULTIVATED ESTATES IN BERBICE, ANNO 1842.

Name of Estate.	Cultivation.	Proprietor.	Remarks in 1849.
WEST COAST.			
Profit	Sugar	E. F. Gibbon	Abandoned
Foulis	do.	Dr. Ansell	Given over to ne-
Nos. 17 and 18	do.	Col. Stopford Blair	[groes
Hope and Experiment	do.	Heirs H. McCalmont	
Waterloo	do.	Davidsons, Barkly & Co.	Leased @ 60l. p. a.
Woodley Park	do.	A. Grant & H. Corlett	
Cotton Tree	do.	John Alves	Given over to ne-
WEST BANK RIVER.			
Blairmount	do.	Col. Stopford Blair	
Balthyock	do.	ditto	
Gelderland	Coffee & Plantns.	Heirs of Prass & La Westerlo	Abandoned
La Fraternité	do.	Westerlo & Co. and widow Sporon	Idem
Augsburg	do.	Lutheran Congregation	Idem
Standvastigheid	Sugar	J. Junor & P. McKay	40 acres canes left
Zuidwyk	do.	J. Grimmond & W. Campbell.	
De Resolutie	Coffee & Plantns.	Heirs Genl. Murray	Abandoned
Hanover	Sugar	T. & W. Earle & Co.	Idem by negroes
S'Gravenhagen	Coffee & Plantns.	John Alves	Idem
Bestendigheid	do.	Baron Von Voorst & J. Timmers	Idem
Dankbaarheid and Rumzigt	do.	E. Carberry & Dr. M'Kie	Idem
Rossfield & Fearn	do.	John Ross	A plantain walk remaining
Nieuw Hoop	do.	A. G. Calmer	Abd. (s. for 300l.)
De Liefde	do.	Andrew Ross	Idem
Lust tot Rust	do.	Davidsons, Barkly, & Co.	Idem
Kerstelling	Sugar	Grantly & Berkley	Idem
EAST BANK RIVER.			
Bloemhoff	Coffee & Plantains	Da La Painia & Sa Porta	Idem
La Prudence	do.	Heirs of Sabloniere & Westerlo	Idem
L'Esperance	do.	M. J. Timmers	Coffee abandoned
Maria & Germania	Sugar	Geo. Jas. & Wm. Laing	
Vryberg	Coffee & Plantns.	J. V. Mittelholzer	Abandoned
Shepmoed	do.	Sir Alex Woodford	Idem
Ma Retraite	Sugar	Heirs J. Fullarton & W. Laing & B. Chisholm & Grantley & Berkley	Abandoned
Welgelegen	Coffee		

Name of Estate.	Cultivation.	Proprietor.	Remarks in 1849.
Highbury	Sugar	Davidsons, Barkly & Co.	Leased @ 400l p.a.
Buseo Lust	Coffee & Plantns.	Heirs Genl. Murray	Abandoned
De Kinderen	do.	Heirs L. Van Rossum	Idem
Deutchem	do.	Heirs of N. Winter	Idem
Enfield	Sugar	Geo. Jas. & Wm. Laing	Idem
Friends	do.	ditto	
Ge Broeder's	Coffee & Plantains	John Alves	Abandoned
Lonsdale	do.	L. P. & minors Henery	Idem
Rotterdam	do.	Heirs of Prass & A. Westerlo	Idem
Belle Vue	do.	Davidsons, Barkly & Co.	Idem
Everton	Sugar	G. Fullarton & A. M'Donald	
Providence	do.	L. P. & minors Henery	
SOUTH SIDE CANJE.			
Smythfield	Sugar	W. Fry & H. Heriston	
Uryheid	Coffee & Plantns.	L. L. Hodge & Dr. Munro	Abandoned
Lochaber	Sugar	D. C. Cameron & J. Kirkwood	
Sandvoort	Coffee & Plantns.	T. C. H. Moore & J. H. Baird	Aband. & sold out
Blyendaal	do.	Heirs of Sabloniere	Idem
Anna Clementia	do.	James Forsythe	Idem
Philadelphia	Sugar	L. L. Hodge & Dr. Munro	Idem by negroes
N. BANK CANJE.			
New Forest	do.	J. Grimmond & W. Campbell	
Goldstone Hall	do.	Lord Reay	Nearly abandoned
Adelphi	do.	Crs. Troughton, Brothers & Co.	
Reliance	do.	Davidsons, Barkly & Co	
Rose Hall	do.	ditto	Leased
Canefield	do.	D. C. Cameron $\frac{2}{3}$, J. Kirkwood $\frac{1}{3}$	
EAST COAST CANAL.			
Prospect	do.	J. Kirkwood $\frac{2}{3}$, A. Austin $\frac{1}{3}$	Nearly abandoned
Smithson's Place	do.	Heirs of C. Faloon	
CORENTYNE COAST.			
Albion	do.	J. Chisholm & D. Fraser	
Hampshire	do.	William Cort	Abandoned
Portmourant	do.	Von Rader & C. Kyte	Nearly so
Alness	do.	R. G. Butts	Totally so
Mary's Aope	do.	Heirs of Tait & Kewley	Idem
CORENTYNE RIVER.			
Eliza and Mary Skeldon	do.	Heirs N. Winter	
	do.	Mrs. Wm. Ross	

APPENDIX B.

From the Morning Journal (Jamaica paper).

(See page 39.)

"In the same article, a part of which we have reprinted above, the *Daily News* pretends to give a description of a Jamaica Sugar Estate, and the system on which it is managed, in the following words :

"In order to secure the full advantages of that retrenchment, the West Indians themselves, on their parts, must concede. If the Colonial Office is to blame, they are not less so. They may talk of mal-administration, but the main source of the evils they are now enduring lies at their own door. Can anything have been more profligate or reckless than their own management of their own estates? Look at the system upon which the sugar cultivation has been carried on. People at home think and talk of a sugar estate as if it were a tolerably large farm; but it is infinitely more like a small kingdom. A large sugar plantation in Jamaica will consist of many thousand acres of land, some in wood, some in pasturage, some planted with cane, some with Indian corn, and by far the greater part uncultivated altogether. This kingdom is governed by an agent living in Kingston, or Spanish Town, who receives the pay of a colonial governor for making an annual visit to it; riding over the grounds, attended by all the subordinate officers, and giving dinners during his stay at "the Great House" to all the country round about, at the expense of the estate. The lieutenant of this magnifico is the overseer or busha, who has a house provided for him, and a salary of £100. or £150. a-year. Under him are three or four subordinates, called book-keepers, sallow-faced young men, educating for overseerships, each with £50. or £60. salary, and all living in the house with their board provided for them. On the same establishment there is also frequently a doctor, and not unfrequently an English carpenter or engineer, brought out to teach the blackies to use tools. Each of these officials has got a brown lady in residence with him, and most of the brown ladies have got a retinue of piccaninnies. The ladies and the piccaninnies are not paid salaries like the rest, but they live equally at the expense of the proprietor and get "pickings" in a variety of shapes, which none know better than the brown ladies how to scrape together. And "massa" pays for all; "massa" who is at home, poor man, at Clifton or at Cheltenham, anxiously expecting the next mail, and hoping it may contain "this my first of exchange" from the Kingston agent, who most probably is just preparing to send him instead a bill "for the expenses caused by the last hurricane."

"But we have described only the "staff;" if we go on to speak of the working force of the estate, we have more extravagances to unfold. First of all, there are the negroes, each family occupying a house, and each having his allotment of ground whereon to plant provisions. We say nothing of the pay of these negroes. Before the emancipation the proprietor had to feed and clothe them. Every week salt provisions and other sundries were distributed amongst them, and every year they were to be provided with coats, trousers, hats, handkerchiefs, and other articles of costume. We set all this against the present pay of the effective labourer. But to carry on a sugar estate upon the present system, there must be cattle and machinery. The proprietor is both a herdsman and a manufacturer. There are, perhaps, thirty or forty oxen, as many horses, and twice as many mules on the estate. The oxen are required for ordinary agricultural operations, and to take the sugar for shipment to the coast. The mules are needed to bring canes from the "hill-pieces," and generally for the upland work of the estate. The horses are less profitably employed; usually they are for the riding of the busha, the doctor, the engineer, the carpenter, the book-keepers, and the brown ladies; the first three, perhaps, will have a pair or two of the best of them for their phaetons; the overseer's lady, possibly, may have a couple of ponies for her pony carriage, and to take the piccaninnies for a morning's drive. It is needless to say that all these animals are bred, reared, fed, and physicked on the property; all at the expense of "Massa," who is enjoying himself in the "Old Well-walk," or, if it be winter, at the fire-side in "Widow Joseph's" Coffee-room, at Cheltenham.

Then there is the machinery. "The mill" is generally in the West Indies a very complicated concern. It may be a steam mill, a water mill, or a cattle mill. The last requires an extra herd of cattle, and is the slowest and most difficult to work. The water mill works according, of course, to the supply of water. In the mountains it may do admirably in wet weather; in the low lands the steam mill is safer. But then, in the low lands fuel is expensive, and must be brought from a distance; besides which, the steam engine, under negro management, is constantly getting out of order. Under either of these systems, therefore, it not unfrequently happens that the "mill" is brought to a stand still in the very midst of the harvest, and in that case all the canes that are cut grow sour and are useless for the purposes of sugar making. So, "Massa" at home is disappointed again; his year's profits are gone; and he has nothing left but to console himself with another glass of "No. 4" at the pump room, by way of washing off the extra bile occasioned by the news that there is a deficiency instead of a surplus in the annual accounts of his estate.

"'Massa,' in fact, pays for all. He pays for it out of what? The profits of the sugar cane. Nothing else, remember—nothing else. The houses are not profitable to him; they are maintained

for the benefit of the agent, the busha, *et hoc genus*. The timber is not for him, though the forests of Jamaica abound with precious trees; dye woods and guaicum, iron wood and braziletto, mahogany and cedar. The fruits are not his: pines and pomegranates, oranges and citrons—these are wanted for ‘the great house’ table. The plants are not grown for his consumption, neither the yam, the banana, the sweet potato, nor the cassava—these are required for the ‘busha’ and his tribe, and the capsicums and peppers are the ‘Brown Lady’s’ perquisites. The horses and mules are not really his; we have shewn who these are wanted for. The Guinea corn or maize is not grown for his advantage: that is wanted to feed the busha’s horses, and to cram the ducks and chickens in the ‘Brown Lady’s’ aviary. Last of all, the negroes, though he pays for them, are not really employed for his advantage:—no,—by far the greater part of the wages he expends go to domestics attending on the staff, or to blackies employed in the cultivation and supervision that is necessary to support ‘the staff.’

“If these things be true—and they cannot be gainsaid—is not a ‘retrenchment’ necessary far beyond the small retrenchment of salaries that colonial legislatures now propose! We know that we have not told one half the story of West Indian extravagance yet; but we have said enough to show what is the source of the evils which cause us to receive by every packet such terrible accounts of West Indian ruin. ‘Ruin!’—of course there is ruin under such a system: what else can be expected?”

We have said that the first part of the article contained misrepresentation and exaggeration, but this is the climax of absurdity: it would not have been a likeness but a gross caricature of what it pretends to describe, had it even professed to give a sketch of a Jamaica estate thirty years ago. The Kingston Agent who received the pay of a Colonial Governor, exists no longer: if he ever did so, it certainly was not within the last twenty years; and at the present time we only know of two or three gentlemen in Kingston who have anything to do with agencies of estates, and we very much doubt whether the emoluments they receive therefrom do more than pay their travelling expenses. So much for the Kingston “Magnifico;” and in Spanish Town there has been no person connected with estates for many years. The gentlemen who do manage or “govern”—as the *Daily News* has it—estates in the present times are mostly persons who have risen from the class which he calls “sallow-faced young men educating for overseerships”—they all reside in the country, and instead of only visiting the estates once a-year,

do so at least once a month. As to the "dinners at the great house to all the country round about," we are sorry to say the story is too good to be true; and as to agents receiving the pay of a Colonial Governor, we very much doubt if the whole body of that much maligned class receive as much for their great labour and responsibility as our Governor gets for aiding Earl Grey to misgovern and ruin Jamaica. At all events, it is a fact within our own knowledge that very many, if not the whole of this class of gentlemen have been cut down 20, 30, and even 40 per cent, where they get salaries, and where they get commissions, small crops and low prices have cut down their emoluments in an equal ratio.

Then, as to the overseers, the case is equally exaggerated. The average salaries paid them never were more than £90 to £120; and now they are much reduced, few being more than £80, we believe, with an allowance of from £30 to £50, for finding their table; and few, indeed, have the aid of even one "sallow-faced young man" now-a-days—this latter class being almost swept away by the poverty which Free-Trade legislation has brought upon us. In one parish it is, we understand, the practice to give a "sallow-faced young man" a few pounds to superintend the distillery during crop, but nothing for the rest of the year, and to have only one overseer for three or four estates. Throughout the country, indeed, every one connected with the superintendence of agricultural affairs has been of late ground down to the very lowest remuneration on which they can live, and much lower than people of the same attainments would be paid in stations of similar labour and responsibility elsewhere.

Then instead of a doctor and an engineer living on each estate "at the expense of *massa*," there is not always one of these in each parish. During the existence of slavery, indeed, a doctor was employed to attend the negroes at so much per head, but he lived in no other way "at the expense of *massa*." A carpenter was of course requisite where so much machinery, and agricultural implements, and utensils were to be kept in order; but poverty now-a-days has compelled "*busha*" to assume that in addition to his other duties. The fine flashy story about thirty or forty horses being kept on an estate for the riding of the *busha*, the

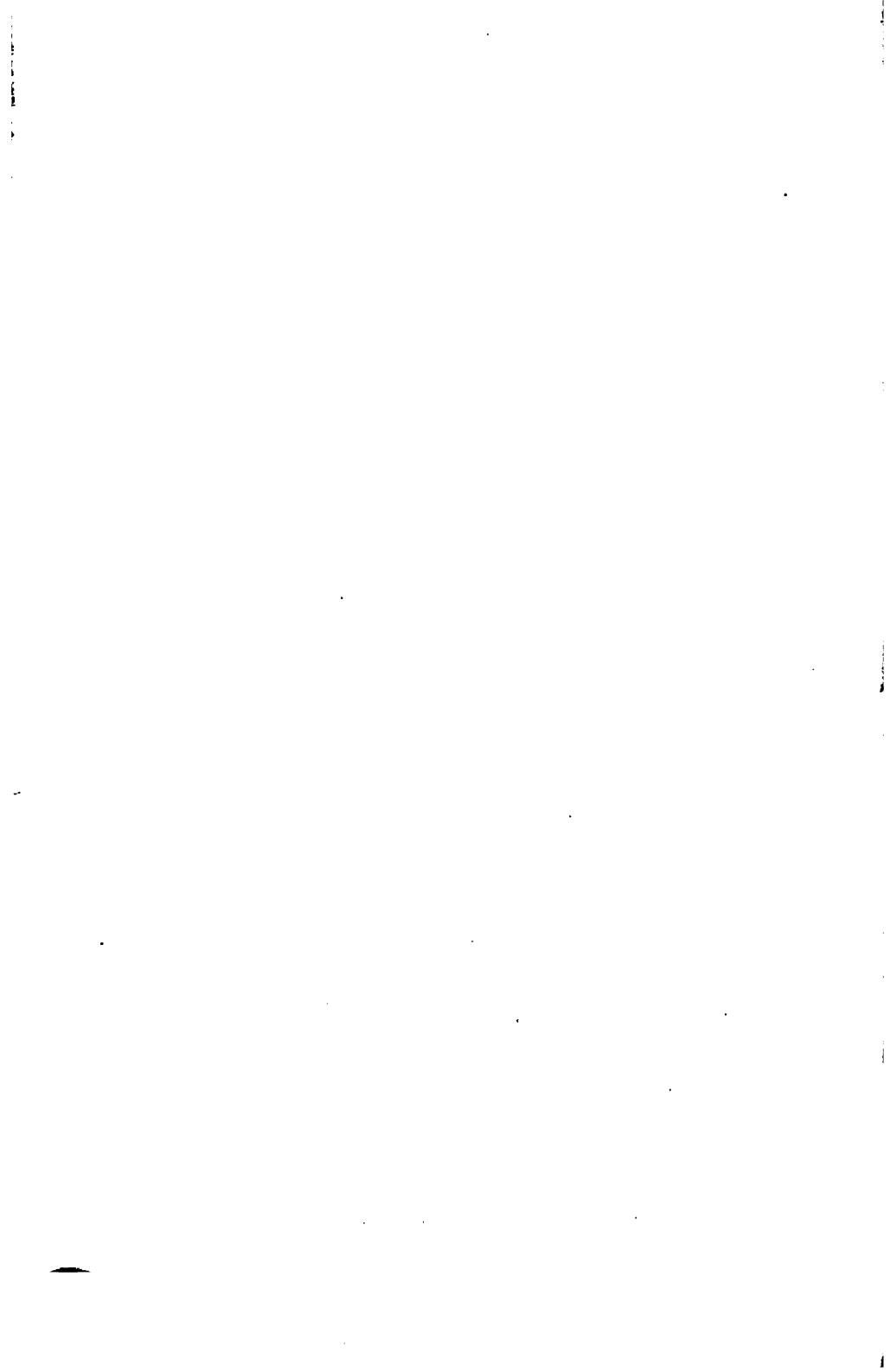
doctor, the engineer, the carpenter, the bookkeepers, and brown ladies, is simply a gratuitous falsehood ; such a practice never prevailed even in the most palmy days of Jamaica, and much less does it do so now. The busha certainly keeps horses, because his work, under a tropical sun, could not be done without, but they are invariably his own property. We have never heard of a single instance in which horses were kept for the use of the servants on an estate, at the expense of the proprietor, and certainly *never* for the brown ladies. One gentleman who lately found his pennis overstocked with horses, which he could not sell, came to the determination of having no stock on his properties but his own, which he gave his "bushas" the privilege of riding to do his work in the superintendence of his estates. But this is the only case we have ever heard of, in which the accommodation was given. If the houses are not profitable to "massa," they save him the expense of paying extra allowance to his servants as house rent. Besides that, it is essential that these servants should be on the spot for the protection of his property. "The forests of Jamaica" certainly do "abound in precious trees;" but not in one case out of twenty do these appertain to sugar estates: and even where it is so, "massa" can get the same kind of timbers cheaper from Cuba than he can take them out of his own woods on account of the great cost of labour which the effects of Whig misgovernment have hitherto entailed upon us. "Pines and pomegranates, oranges, and citrons," have never been in sufficient demand to make them worth taking to market—"and the yam, banana, the sweet potatoe, and the cassava," can be bought cheaper by busha and his tribe from the negroes than they can be grown for on massa's land; as to the capsicums and peppers which he calls "the brown ladies' perquisites," they are so common as to be worthless. Now that we are getting into closer communication with the United States, however, all these things will gradually acquire a value which they never had before, and "massa," will no doubt, get the benefit instead of the brown ladies' pepper pot, the seasoning of which was the only extent to which these perquisites were applied.

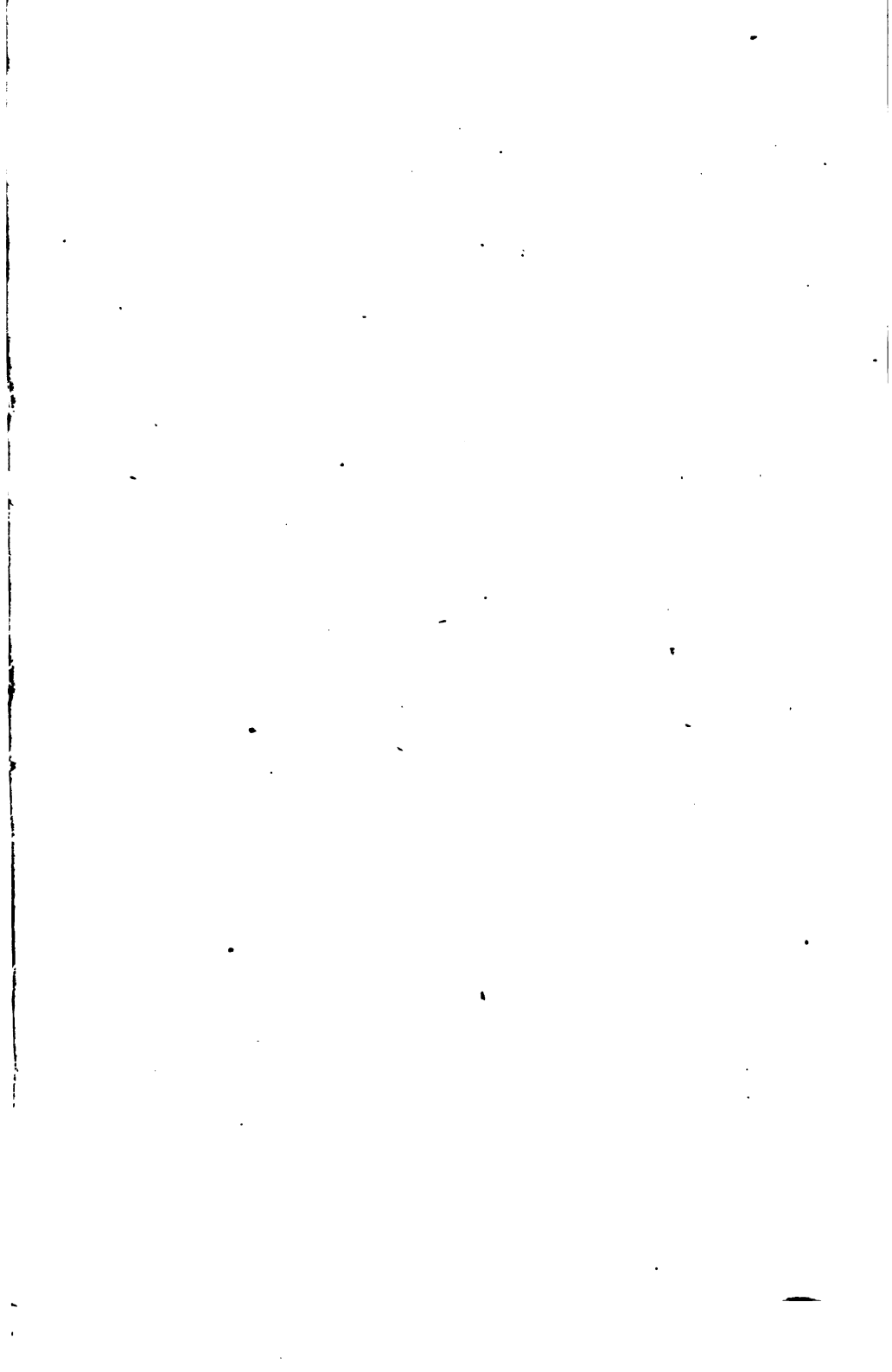
As to the guinea corn and maize not being grown for the advantage of "massa," but to "feed the busha's horses and cram

the ducks and chickens in the brown ladies' aviary," the case is the same as the matter of the houses. Busha must keep horses to do the work he is employed to do, and they must be fed, so the guinea corn and maize go in part payment, being more easily attainable by both parties than the money which "massa" must otherwise shell out to busha to find these rations; and the same with "the ducks and chickens which are crammed in the brown ladies' aviary," these last being for busha's table, who must eat as well as his horses.

"Massa pays for all." Doubtless he does; but he requires certain skilled services to be rendered in a climate in which he will not risk his own life, and the party to render these services must have education and acquirements which would gain him a competence at home or abroad. Therefore "massa" must pay the value of such services, not at the rate of a London clerk's salary, or the wages of a country bailiff, but in proportion to the value of the property entrusted to his care, the extent of his responsibility, and the risk of his life, in a country in which "massa" is afraid to trust his own. Does the *Daily News* know the value of the property which is under the immediate charge of "busha" on such an estate as he has above alluded to? We think not, and we may tell him, then, that the works alone are worth, at a tithe of their original cost, £3,000; the crop on the ground, say 300 hhds. at £12, and 150 phns. Rum at £10, will be together £5,100; the preparation for the following year's crop up to this period will have been equal to £500; the live stock and plantation implements and utensils will be worth at least £1,500 more, all in actual sunk capital, making together £10,000, besides weekly cash disbursements to the amount of £60 to £100 constantly. This is a responsibility, then, which cannot be entrusted to every clodhopper, and which "massa" has a right to pay for, if he cannot undertake it himself."

THE END.





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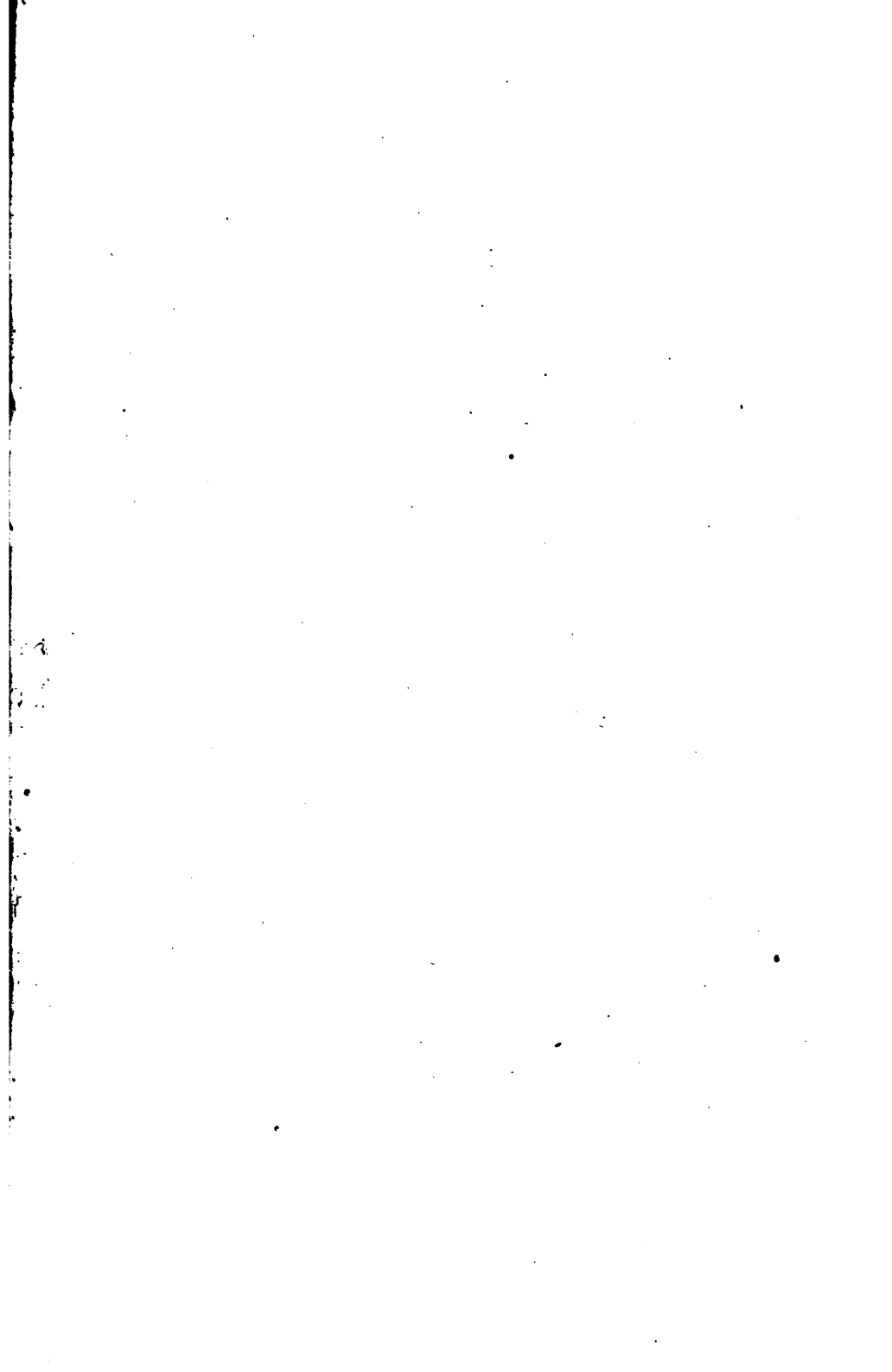
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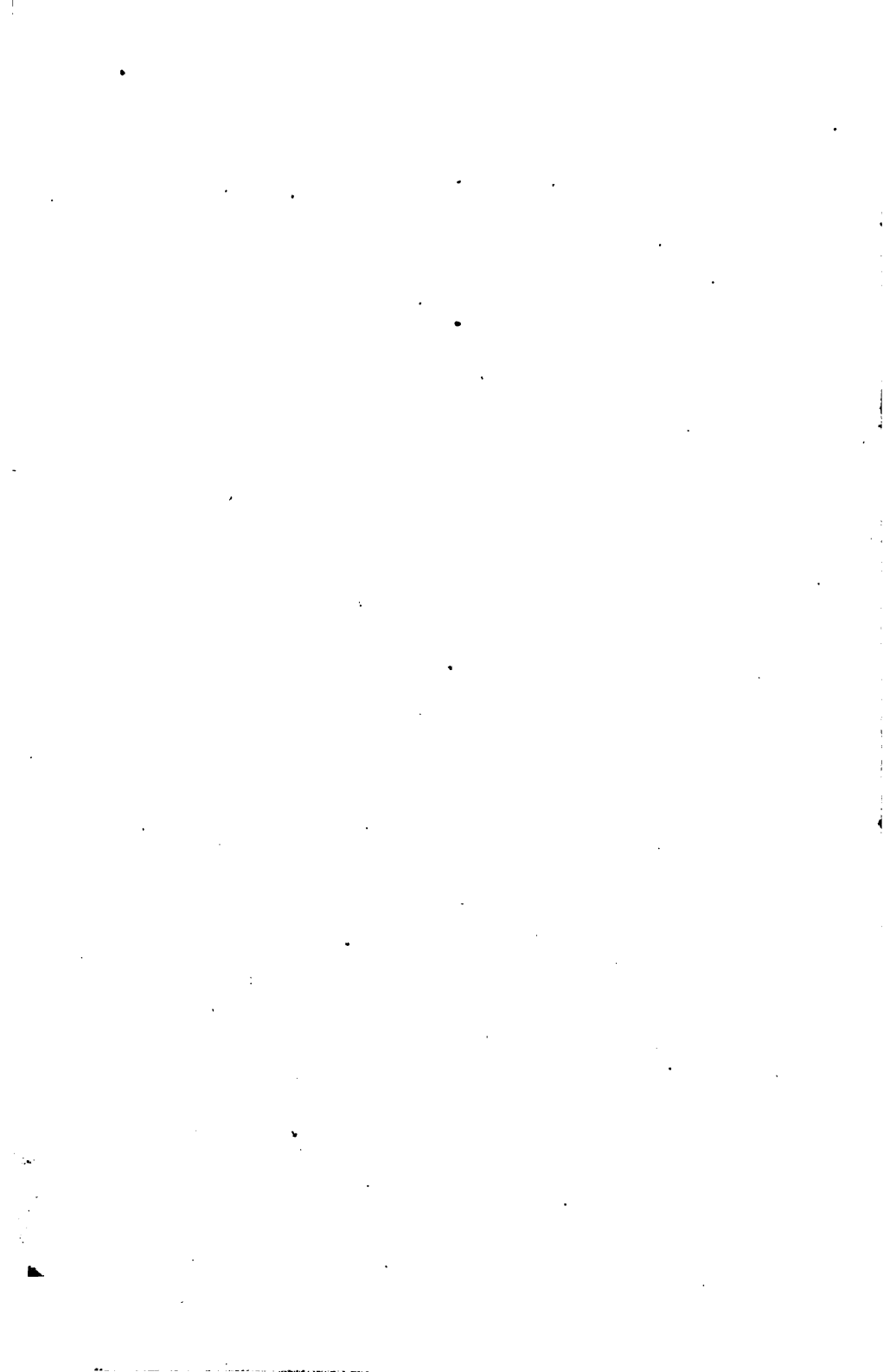
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